



Washington State Fusion Center INFOCUS



MONDAY — 6 JUN 2022

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| HEADLINE | 06/06 Mild Covid cases long-term heart problems |
| SOURCE | https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/long-covid-heart-problems/ |
| GIST | <p>ATLANTA — Chadwick Knight weathered a rough bout of COVID-19 back in January 2021 without being hospitalized, but he never bounced back to his former healthy self.</p> <p>He got winded all the time. He experienced brain fog.</p> <p>Then, well over a year since catching the coronavirus, the 47-year-old collapsed on his living room floor last month. He was rushed to an emergency room with a new, life-threatening post-COVID complication: a blood clot in an artery going from his heart to his lungs.</p> <p>“You get sick, and you think you’re pretty much better and then you are still having issues. And now, it just seems like more things on top of things, and you don’t know what the future holds,” said Knight, who lived in metro Atlanta for several years before recently moving to Dothan, Alabama. “It causes you to worry a lot and weighs you down a lot mentally.”</p> <p>Cardiac doctors are reporting a growing number of patients like Knight, who have lingering post-COVID cardiovascular symptoms or new, serious heart conditions. These patients may have a wide range of heart problems, including irregular or racing heartbeat, blood clots, coronary disease and heart failure.</p> <p>A new large study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found 1 in 5 adult COVID survivors under the age of 65 in the United States has experienced at least one health condition that could be considered long COVID. Among those 65 and over, the number is 1 in 4.</p> <p>Long COVID is the name given to symptoms of a coronavirus infection that linger for more than a month and can include problems in many different organs such as the heart, lungs and kidneys.</p> <p>The extent of long COVID cardiac symptoms is coming into better focus.</p> <p>“We’ve seen, since early on, patients come in with long COVID,” said Dr. Jeffrey Marshall, chief of Northside Hospital Cardiovascular Institute. “And the first thing that doctors have to do is decide does this patient have objective heart disease, or do they have this syndrome where they tend to be dizzy when they stand up — people who have a fast heart rate, fatigue, but they don’t have anything structurally wrong with their heart based on our current knowledge?”</p> |

In a recent study of the health records of more than 150,000 people who were treated for COVID in Department of Veterans Affairs facilities before Jan. 15, 2021, researchers found that the patients had a “substantial” risk of developing cardiovascular problems for at least a year after a positive test for the virus.

Patients who were hospitalized with COVID faced the highest risk of serious heart or cardiovascular problems, especially those who were treated in the intensive care unit. But risks were elevated even among people who did not have severe cases and were never hospitalized.

Overall, researchers found when comparing those who never had the virus with those who had, in every 1,000 patients, 45 more developed at least one of 20 different heart conditions. That’s equal to about 4%. Despite the that low percentage, the numbers can add up: With over 83 million people infected in the U.S., millions could potentially suffer cardiovascular complications.

Dr. Rajeev Singh, a Piedmont Heart Institute cardiologist, said the VA study’s strengths are its massive size and rigorous statistical analysis. But he said the study also has limitations: Most of the participants were white men, and the data was collected before most were vaccinated and before the emergence of many variants, including omicron.

Even so, the study’s findings have resonated with doctors.

“Any COVID is bad COVID and can have many downstream effects — neurological, cardiovascular,” said Singh. “The best way to prevent long COVID is not to get COVID in the first place.”

Even before the COVID pandemic, heart disease was the leading cause of death in the U.S. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that every year about 659,000 people die of heart disease — or 1 in 4 deaths.

Doctors have identified several ways COVID can damage heart muscle and heart function. As the body’s immune system fights off the virus, the inflammatory process can damage blood vessels and some healthy tissue, including the heart. But often medical tests don’t find any obvious signs of heart damage in those who report cardiac symptoms.

One leading theory about long COVID cardiac issues suggests that, for some people experiencing a racing or skipping heartbeat, dizziness or shortness of breath, it may not be a new cardiac problem. Instead, it might be a neurologic one triggered by the virus. COVID can affect the autonomic nervous system, which controls involuntary bodily functions such as blood pressure, heart and breathing rates, body temperature, digestion and metabolism. When this system malfunctions, so do the processes that it regulates.

That’s been the case with Adrienne Levesque, who has grappled with an array of debilitating symptoms since catching COVID for the second time in August 2020. She’s had not only brain fog and fatigue but a racing heartbeat even when resting, elevated blood pressure and palpitations. The 49-year-old started seeing a cardiologist in late 2020 at a long COVID clinic and was diagnosed with dysautonomia, a malfunction of the autonomic nervous system.

Levesque started the Georgia COVID long haulers group on Facebook. “Cardiac issues are huge. There are so many people in the Facebook group having the same things going on,” said Levesque.

Doctors encourage former COVID patients who are experiencing irregular heartbeats, dizziness and other problems to discuss these symptoms with their health care providers. Medications and physical therapy can help alleviate some symptoms.

Doctors say there is good news for those patients who don’t have damage to their heart: Most of them seem to get better over time.

Marshall of Northside said serious cardiac complications — such as myocarditis, an inflammation of the heart muscle that can lead to heart failure — are extremely rare in long COVID patients who don't have anything structurally wrong with their hearts. Far more common, he said, is "irregular heartbeat, dizzy standing up," he said. "Those people over time seem to be getting better."

Dr. Joel Rosenstock — medical director of AbsoluteCare in Buckhead, which now includes the Long COVID Clinic, agrees. He rarely sees serious, life-threatening cardiovascular complications. The majority of his long haulers have what he calls "the softer sides of long COVID."

"It's not soft to them, by any means," he continued. Symptoms, he said, often include "fatigue, people functioning 40% to 60% of their normal energy levels. People who used to go to the gym every day and now they can't go at all. They used to walk 2 miles every day. Now they can barely walk 500 feet. Brain fog is a gigantic problem."

Rosenstock, who develops individualized care plans to manage his patients' symptoms, said his goal is to help every long-haul patient get better, but the recovery can be slow and some people may never return to their former health.

"One of the things I always ask patients is what percent of normal are you? And, oftentimes, they will say 25%," said Rosenstock. "And when they come back weeks later, they may say they are at 40%. We celebrate that improvement."

After getting sick with COVID in October, Ashley Morris, a 42-year-old medical assistant, experienced a constellation of lingering symptoms, including "tachycardia," a medical term for a heartbeat of more than 100 beats per minute without exertion. Morris, who is a practice coordinator at Northside Hospital's Cardiovascular Institute, underwent a battery of tests, including an EKG to rule out blood clots and other heart problems. Her tests showed no measurable damage. She was prescribed an inhaler and a physical therapy program that was tailored for her COVID recovery.

"I'm better but not fully better," she said.

Morris also sees patients who are struggling with some of the same health problems.

"I feel for them, and some are kind of like me. Ever since I had COVID, I have had shortness of breath, and that's one of the biggest complaints I think," she said "Now, if I carry groceries to my car, I have to wait a few minutes in my vehicle to catch my breath."

Morris said she was unvaccinated when she fell ill and plans to get vaccinated soon.

Levesque is also better than she was in the fall of 2020, but said she is far from reaching a complete recovery.

Meanwhile, Knight, who caught the virus before becoming eligible for the vaccine, is now vaccinated and boosted. He is taking blood thinners to prevent any more blood clots and continues to go to a long COVID clinic for help with other lingering problems. He will soon undergo a cardiac catheterization to take a closer look at his heart.

Lately, he worries his condition may be getting worse, not better.

Simply carrying his 15-pound Shih Tzu, Cooper, to the mailbox leaves him exhausted.

"I miss the pre-COVID days when you are living your life and not having any issues. I am hoping I won't get as short of breath. I am hoping no more blood clots and they won't find anything wrong with my heart and I can not be so anxious."

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| HEADLINE | 06/06 Variants keep Covid cases simmering |
| SOURCE | https://www.wsj.com/articles/why-variants-keep-covid-19-cases-simmering-in-the-u-s-11654513200 |
| GIST | <p>In recent weeks, a new version of the Covid-19 virus—named BA.2.12.1—became the dominant variety in the U.S., according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The variant’s rapid spread, coupled with growing case counts, raised concern among health officials, who last month strengthened their recommendations for Covid-19 boosters.</p> <p>BA.2.12.1 is a version of the Omicron variant that was first detected in southern Africa last fall. Omicron quickly spread throughout the world, supplanting the once-dominant Delta and spawning a succession of increasingly infectious subvariants.</p> <p>The BA.1 and BA.1.1 subvariants fueled a record surge in U.S. Covid-19 cases last winter. These were soon edged out by BA.2, which is an estimated 30% more transmissible than its predecessors. BA.1.12.1 has since supplanted BA.2, suggesting that it is even more contagious.</p> <p>From mid-April to late-May, the prevalence of BA.2.12.1 nearly tripled in the U.S. Case counts rose by a similar rate over this period.</p> <p>Cases have started to drop in some parts of the country, such as New York state, but they have been rising in California, suggesting the latest Covid-19 wave is shifting westward. Official counts significantly underestimate the actual numbers of cases, due to increased at-home testing and decreased reporting on the part of states.</p> <p>One factor contributing to BA.2.12.1’s rise could be its ability to evade immune defenses built up from vaccination or prior infection. Earlier Omicron subvariants exhibited similar properties.</p> <p>A study published in February in the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report measured the effectiveness of Covid-19 vaccines over time. Researchers tracked hospital and urgent-care visits among people who had received either two or three doses of mRNA vaccines. They compared outcomes across periods in which either the Delta or Omicron variants were predominant.</p> <p>During both periods, people who received a booster enjoyed stronger protection than those who received only two doses. But during the Omicron period, immunity was less strong and fell faster. This suggests that Omicron is better than previous variants at evading the protection provided by vaccines.</p> <p>Despite being less effective than it was against Delta, a booster still provides significant protection against serious disease caused by Omicron compared with two shots alone, the study suggested.</p> <p>While two-thirds of Americans are fully vaccinated, less than a third have received a booster. Less than 5% have received a second booster, which is recommended for those 50 and older and those 12 and older who are immunocompromised.</p> <p>Omicron’s ability to evade vaccine-induced immunity was on display during last winter’s surge, when “breakthrough” cases and deaths among the vaccinated reached new highs.</p> <p>In the past year, the gap between the vaccinated and unvaccinated for both cases and deaths has shrunk. This suggests vaccines no longer provide as much protection against coronavirus as they used to.</p> <p>Still, cases and deaths among vaccinated individuals remain well below those experienced by the unvaccinated.</p> <p>Besides vaccines, prior infection with the Covid-19 virus can provide immune protection against future bouts of the disease. A CDC report released in April estimated that almost 60% of Americans had been infected with the Covid-19 virus. The findings are based on blood samples collected from labs throughout the country, which can be tested for antibodies produced in response to the virus. The February estimate</p> |

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| | <p>was up from 34% in December, reflecting the large number of Americans who were infected during last winter's Omicron surge.</p> <p>As more infectious variants like BA.2.12.1 take hold in the U.S., immunity built up from last winter's surge may be protecting the population from a larger rise in cases. But researchers caution that having antibodies from a prior infection doesn't guarantee protection against future disease. And it isn't clear how much or for how long immune memory remains effective.</p> <p>Omicron's ability to evade immune defense increases the risk of reinfection—catching the virus more than once. A study from Qatar published in the New England Journal of Medicine found that in most cases, previous infection provided less protection against reinfection with Omicron than it did against earlier variants such as Alpha, Beta and Delta.</p> <p>Nationwide data on Covid-19 reinfections isn't available. But data from New York state showed reinfections peaking during last winter's Omicron surge, then beginning to climb again in March, after BA.2.12.1 was first detected in the state.</p> <p>It remains to be seen how much the rise of BA.2.12.1 will shape the latest Covid-19 wave. The outcome rests in part on the interplay between immunity the population has acquired and the continuously mutating virus's ability to evade these defenses.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/05 Inflation: wealthy splurge, poor pull back |
| SOURCE | https://apnews.com/article/inflation-personal-taxes-67ce29f58a3668907db9027a677cc7af |
| GIST | <p>NEW YORK (AP) — Americans at the low end of the income rung are once again struggling to make ends meet.</p> <p>A confluence of factors — the expiration of federal stimulus checks and surging inflation on staples like gas and food — are driving an even bigger wedge between the haves and have-nots.</p> <p>While wealthier shoppers continue to splurge, low-income shoppers have pulled back faster than expected in the past two months. They're focusing on necessities while turning to cheaper items or less expensive stores. And they're buying only a little at a time.</p> <p>It's a reversal from a year or so ago when low-income shoppers, flush with money from the government and buoyed by wage increases, were able to spend more freely.</p> <p>Kisha Galvan, a 44-year-old mother of eight children from ages 9 to 27, was able to stock up on groceries for the week and buy extras like clothing and shoes at Walmart for her children last year.</p> <p>But without the pandemic-related government support and inflation hovering at a near 40-year high, she is buying more canned food and depending on the local food pantry several times a week instead of once a week.</p> <p>"I shop meal to meal," said the Rockford, Illinois, resident who has lived on disability for the past 15 years. "Before, we didn't have to worry about what we were going to get. We just go get it."</p> <p>The deep divide in spending was reflected in the latest round of quarterly earnings for retailers. At the high end of the spectrum, Nordstrom and Ralph Lauren reported stronger-than-expected sales as their well-heeled shoppers returned to pre-pandemic routines. Lululemon also reported strong quarterly sales of its pricey athletic wear.</p> <p>But on the other end, Walmart's customers are switching to cheaper lunch meats and half gallons of milk from full gallons. Kohl's, a mid-priced department store, said its customers were spending less on each</p> |

visit. And Gap slashed its annual financial outlook, specifically citing the strain from inflation at its low-price Old Navy chain.

Both Dollar Tree and Dollar General, which historically benefit from shoppers trading down during difficult economic times, raised their sales outlooks last month. Meanwhile, discounter Big Lots suffered steep sales declines in the latest quarter, noting cutbacks in items like furniture.

“We are now in a new chapter where high inflation is greatly limiting the ability of consumers to make discretionary purchases, especially of high ticket items,” Big Lots CEO and President Bruce K. Thorn told analysts late last month. “We know that many Americans now are once again living paycheck-to-paycheck.”

The pullback among low-income shoppers has not affected overall spending, which is still up. In April, the government said retail sales outpaced inflation for a fourth straight month, a reassuring sign that consumers — the primary drivers of America’s economy — are still providing vital support and helping ease concerns that a recession might be near.

But analysts believe even affluent shoppers could retrench if the stock market continues to weaken. Marshal Cohen, chief industry advisor at market research firm The NPD Group Inc., said the stock market affects higher income shoppers “psychologically” and more losses on paper could make them cut back.

The spending mood has shifted from last October and November, when the Fed conducted a survey and found that almost eight in 10 adults were either “doing okay or living comfortably” when it came to their finances in 2021, the highest proportion to say so since the survey began in 2013. For those earning less than \$25,000, the proportion that said they were doing at least okay jumped to 53% from 40%.

But inflation has taken a bigger bite out of personal budgets and wiped away some of the wage gains, especially for those who earn less. The national average cost of a gallon of gas, for example, has jumped to \$4.76 from \$4.20 a month ago and a painful 56% from a year earlier, according to AAA.

At the Northern Illinois Food Bank, which feeds people in 13 counties including Galvan and her family, the average monthly number of visits grew to more than 400,000 in the February through April period, from 311,000 in the July through September period, according to president and CEO Julie Yurko.

Across the economy, median wages jumped 6% in April from a year earlier, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. But even though that was the largest increase since 1990, it was still below the inflation rate of 8.3%.

Meanwhile, the poorest one-fifth of Americans have exhausted the savings they’d built up during the pandemic in part through stimulus checks, child tax credit payments and higher wages, according to calculations by Jeffries, an investment bank. Americans’ bank accounts. The other four-fifths of U.S. households are still sitting on a large stockpile of additional savings since the pandemic, with much of that held by the top fifth.

Inflation is playing out differently within businesses that cater to shoppers with varying income levels.

Michelle Gass, CEO of Kohl’s, said some shoppers are trading up to premium brands like Tommy Hilfiger and Calvin Klein, while others are going to lower-price store labels. Macy’s boosted its annual outlook based on the spending habits of its wealthier shoppers, but its customers with median household income of \$75,000 and below are switching more to its off-price brand.

The current environment is making it difficult for retailers to pass on higher costs. Macy’s, for instance, got pushback after raising prices on some casual clothing items and home accessories.

“We’re definitely seeing some balk at some of the prices,” Macy’s CEO Jeff Gennette recently told analysts on the company’s earnings call. “We’ve made adjustments there.”

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| | <p>For the Northern Illinois Food Bank — like many food banks — food costs are spiking amid dwindling donations.</p> <p>“Inflation and rising food costs mean the food bank has to make tough choices about our budget,” Yurko said. “What foods can we provide consistently and what foods can we only provide if they are donated to us?”</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/06 Russia loses yet another general in Ukraine |
| SOURCE | https://www.thedailybeast.com/russia-loses-yet-another-general-in-putins-senseless-ukraine-war?ref=home |
| GIST | <p>Russian General Roman Kutuzov has been killed on the battlefield in eastern Ukraine’s Donbas region, Russian state-owned media reported Sunday.</p> <p>If confirmed by the Russian military, Kutuzov would be at least the fourth Russian general killed in more than three months of fighting in Ukraine.</p> <p>“The general had led soldiers into attack, as if there are not enough colonels,” said Alexander Sladkov, a war correspondent for state-owned Russian media.</p> <p>“On the other hand, Roman was a commander like everyone else, albeit with a higher rank,” Sladkov wrote on his Telegram channel.</p> <p>Kutuzov commanded the self-proclaimed Donetsk People’s Republic 1st Army Corps, according to Ukrainian naval infantry officer Dmitry Ivanov.</p> <p>Kutuzov had ordered his troops to storm a Donetsk region settlement Sunday and “was forced to lead the assault,” Ivanov wrote on Facebook.</p> <p>Russian media has reported on the deaths of three generals since the start of the invasion of Ukraine.</p> <p>Ukraine’s General Staff claims at least 12 Russian generals killed.</p> <p>At least 317 Russian officers have been killed in Ukraine, a third of whom are majors, lieutenant colonels and colonels, independent Russian media reported in April, citing publicly available data.</p> <p>The deaths of senior officers jeopardize the army’s capacity to plan and execute military operations and are a blow to morale on the frontline.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/06 D-Day: largest seaborne invasion in history |
| SOURCE | https://www.maritime-executive.com/article/d-day-at-78-remembering-the-largest-seaborne-invasion-in-history |
| GIST | <p>June 6, 2022 marks the 78th anniversary of the launch of Operation Overlord, better known as D-Day. The beach landings at Normandy, France are perhaps the most enduring symbol of Allied courage in the face of Nazi aggression, and are especially symbolic this year: many of the same allies are pushing back on a new war of aggression in Ukraine, the first major land war in Europe since the end of WWII.</p> <p>On June 6, 1944, Allied forces under General Dwight D. Eisenhower took advantage of a narrow weather window and stormed the beaches at Normandy, France. It was the largest amphibious assault in history and a momentous step towards the end of the war.</p> <p>To support the operation, the Allies had a force of 150,000 soldiers, 11,000 aircraft and 7,000 vessels at their disposal, including 4,000 landing craft and 860 merchant ships. Despite its massive size, "Operation</p> |

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| | <p>Overlord" was kept secret until the beginning of the assault, a success attributable to a careful campaign of deception.</p> <p>The target 50-mile stretch of the Normandy coast was divided into five sectors: Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno and Sword Beach. While the weather on D-Day was far from ideal, postponing would have meant a delay of at least two weeks, as the invasion planners had requirements for the phase of the moon, the tides, and the time of day that meant only a few days in each month would work.</p> <p>Despite the weather, the landings were a success. By the end of the first day Allied troops were on shore and ready to push Nazi forces out of France - but at a heavy price. The men landed under heavy fire from gun emplacements overlooking the beaches, and the shore was mined and covered with obstacles such as wooden stakes, metal tripods and barbed wire. 4,400 Allied personnel died in working their way up the beach, including 2,500 American soldiers. The landing at Omaha Beach accounted for nearly half of the casualties, as steep terrain and limited fire support made the going especially tough.</p> <p>Within a day, naval forces began to engineer the installation of a temporary seaport at Omaha and Gold beaches. Dozens of merchant ships were stripped down, dispatched to the site and sunk in place as block ships to create rudimentary breakwaters, making it easier to bring landing craft onto the beach. The armed crew of these grounded block ships were under aerial bombardment and artillery fire for weeks. Within weeks, engineering teams turned the beachhead into a rudimentary port, complete with piers and floating roadways. It handled four million tonnes of cargo to fuel the fight over the next 10 months. The remains of this engineering marvel can still be seen today at the seaside town of Arromanches, France, the home of the D-Day Museum.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/06 D-Day anniversary: what should it mean? |
| SOURCE | https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/restoring-america/patriotism-unity/what-should-our-d-day-anniversary-mean |
| GIST | <p>D-Day. Ask the average person what that means, and they'll mention something about the amphibious landings in Normandy, France, on June 6, 1944, which began the land battles on the northern front of the European theater of operations in World War II.</p> <p>Most don't know that the men on the southern front of the European theater had five D-Days: their amphibious landings on the shores of French Morocco (Nov. 8, 1942); Sicily (July 9, 1943); Salerno, Italy (Sept. 3, 1943); Anzio, Italy (Jan. 22, 1944); and southern France (Aug. 15, 1944). And the 3rd Battalion of the 30th Infantry Regiment had those five, plus another two in Sicily.</p> <p>But that pales when compared to the Pacific theater, where there were more than 100 D-Days. Many of the amphibious assaults in the Pacific were on Japanese-held islands and were among the most savagely fought battles in American history: Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Saipan, New Guinea, Peleliu, Leyte Gulf, and Iwo Jima. The largest, and last, D-Day was the invasion of Okinawa on April 1, 1945, which brought together the biggest invasion fleet ever assembled, far larger than that engaged in the Normandy invasion.</p> <p>D-Day is just military code for the beginning of any offensive operation. If we add all the land-based D-Days for major battles in the European and Pacific theaters during World War II, there are over 60. If we add in the hundreds of other battles with D-Days, there are well over 1,000 — each requiring precise planning, technical and operational support, air and artillery support, and amazing sacrifice and suffering by the front-line troops for success. Yet most have been relegated to the dustbins of history and forgotten by almost all Americans.</p> <p>For example, while I studied the feats of the men who fought on the southern front of the European theater, I would ask people to name the first European capital liberated by the Allies. The most common answer was Paris. That occurred in August 1944, almost 12 weeks after the southern soldiers liberated Rome in June 1944. Unfortunately, news about Rome's emancipation was buried by the Normandy invasion on June 6. Newsrooms rushed to replace front-page stories recounting the battles to free Rome</p> |

with even larger headlines about Normandy. From that moment on, the southern front became, in essence, the “Forgotten Front.”

Another case in point: Many have heard of the northern army’s horrific Battle of Hurtgen Forest throughout the fall and winter of 1944, but few remember the arguably more gruesome and arduous battles fought in the Vosges Mountains at the same time. In three months of ferocious fighting in severe conditions, the southern front GIs accomplished what no army in the history of warfare had ever done before: conquering an enemy defending the Vosges Mountains — and in winter no less!

Most know about the northern front’s monumental Battle of the Bulge, but almost no one remembers the fierce and potentially more disastrous Battle of the Colmar Pocket and its decisive Battle at La Maison Rouge — waged in some of the worst winter wartime conditions ever recorded. Historian Stephen Ambrose wrote, “It was fought in conditions so terrible that they can only be marveled at, not really imagined.” He added, “Only those who were there can know. More than once in interviewing veterans of the January fighting, when I ask them to describe the cold, men involuntarily shivered.”

What every D-Day in the European and Pacific theaters had in common was that the front-line soldiers and their brothers in combat faced and conquered fear, heartbreak, dread, chaos, stench, casualties, wounds, and unimaginable opposition. Many times, they faced battles they feared would end in inevitable defeat or certain death. They sacrificed the daily comforts most consider essential. Those who returned to the home front savored each new day, each breath, in a new way. They knew their many friends in battle who had left their all on the altar of war, who had sacrificed their tomorrows, had allowed them and us to live for all their and our todays.

All our military men and women deserve to be remembered and honored on D-Day, especially those who gave the ultimate sacrifice, but a special shout-out for those who suffered and sacrificed on every single D-Day, not just those who stormed the beaches of Normandy, is long overdue. Almost all are gone now, but as Gen. Lucian K. Truscott said, “We cannot look back to them if we do not look forward to the future for which they fought — and died.” So, as we celebrate our continued liberty and freedom on this D-Day anniversary, my hope and prayer is that the heroes who fought and died on our D-Days will be forgotten no longer.

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| HEADLINE | 06/06 ‘The Boys of Pointe du Hoc’ |
| SOURCE | https://www.nationalreview.com/corner/the-boys-of-pointe-du-hoc/ |
| GIST | <p>June 6, 1944, was D-Day, “the largest amphibious invasion in history since King Xerxes’s 480 b.c. combined sea and land descent into Greece,” as Victor Davis Hanson has noted. The Allied effort to free Western Europe from Nazi subjugation began on the beaches of Normandy, stormed by thousands of brave soldiers, many of whom perished in the act. It was ultimately successful, though that success no sure thing; not for nothing did Dwight Eisenhower, then Supreme Allied Commander, prepare a speech in the event of its failure.</p> <p>Forty years later, Ronald Reagan became the first president to speak at Normandy. To honor the occasion more broadly, Reagan chose to focus on “the boys of Pointe du Hoc,” choosing the “lonely windswept point on the northern shores of France” as both the setting and the main subject of his address. This redoubt was of great significance to the day’s fighting. As Senator Tom Cotton has explained:</p> <p><i>Visitors to the Pointe rarely fail to comment on its imposing terrain — a sheer white cliff that juts dagger-like into the sea. The German battery atop the Pointe was no less imposing. Pointe du Hoc was a stronghold of Hitler’s Atlantic Wall, a series of fortifications and obstacles built by slave labor to repel an Allied invasion of Europe. Neutralizing Pointe du Hoc was a key American objective in the run-up to the invasion, both because it was the most powerful gun battery in Normandy and because of its critical placement directly between the American landing sites. If the six German guns had roared on D-Day they could have multiplied American casualties on Utah and Omaha beaches.</i></p> |

It fell to the 225 soldiers of the 2nd Ranger Battalion, 62 of whom were in the audience for the speech, to take the cliff — one of countless feats of heroism during the entirety of the campaign. “These are the boys of Pointe du Hoc. These are the men who took the cliffs. These are the champions who helped free a continent. These are the heroes who helped end a war.” Reagan singled them out not to exclude these other feats but to represent them:

All of these men were part of a roll call of honor with names that spoke of a pride as bright as the colors they bore: the Royal Winnipeg Rifles, Poland’s 24th Lancers, the Royal Scots Fusiliers, the Screaming Eagles, the Yeomen of England’s armored divisions, the forces of Free France, the Coast Guard’s “Matchbox Fleet” and you, the American Rangers.

Why did they fight? “It was faith and belief; it was loyalty and love.” And: You all knew that some things are worth dying for. One’s country is worth dying for, and democracy is worth dying for, because it’s the most deeply honorable form of government ever devised by man. All of you loved liberty. All of you were willing to fight tyranny, and you knew the people of your countries were behind you.

Reagan spoke as a contemporary of these men, involved in the war effort though he did not himself fight. World War II was a formative experience and memory for their generation. Now, that generation is dwindling; Reagan himself died 18 years ago. [In another speech by a man who would be president](#), a young Abraham Lincoln spoke of how losing the memory of significant occasions presents a challenge to the perpetuation of American institutions:

I do not mean to say, that the scenes of the revolution are now or ever will be entirely forgotten; but that like every thing else, they must fade upon the memory of the world, and grow more and more dim by the lapse of time. In history, we hope, they will be read of, and recounted, so long as the bible shall be read; — but even granting that they will, their influence cannot be what it heretofore has been. Even then, they cannot be so universally known, nor so vividly felt, as they were by the generation just gone to rest. At the close of that struggle, nearly every adult male had been a participator in some of its scenes. The consequence was, that of those scenes, in the form of a husband, a father, a son or brother, a living history was to be found in every family — a history bearing the indubitable testimonies of its own authenticity, in the limbs mangled, in the scars of wounds received, in the midst of the very scenes related — a history, too, that could be read and understood alike by all, the wise and the ignorant, the learned and the unlearned. — But those histories are gone. They can be read no more forever. They were a fortress of strength; but, what invading foeman could never do, the silent artillery of time has done; the leveling of its walls. They are gone. — They were a forest of giant oaks; but the all-resistless hurricane has swept over them, and left only, here and there, a lonely trunk, despoiled of its verdure, shorn of its foliage; unshading and unshaded, to murmur in a few gentle breezes, and to combat with its mutilated limbs, a few more ruder storms, then to sink, and be no more.

Such is the position we are now in. So what can be done? We would do well to recall the sacrifices of our forebears, through tribute, memory, instruction, and perpetuation of what they fought for, as D-Day itself fades from living recollection.

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| HEADLINE | 06/05 Dollar stalls amid mixed economic signals |
| SOURCE | https://www.wsj.com/articles/dollars-climb-stalls-amid-mixed-economic-signals-11654376147?mod=hp_lead_pos1 |
| GIST | <p>A run of mixed economic data is dragging on the U.S. dollar, stalling a rally that has rippled through the economy and financial markets.</p> <p>The WSJ Dollar Index, which measures the dollar against a basket of 16 currencies, is around 2% off its May peak and fell 1.1% last month. That decline broke a steady march that brought the dollar to multidecade highs. The index rose 0.6% last week, breaking a two-week losing streak.</p> |

Behind the slip has been a subtle shift in the economic landscape. According to recent economic reports, American consumers are still spending money at a rapid pace, while [employers keep adding jobs](#), extending the trends that had helped lift the dollar over the past 12 months or so.

Yet there have been signs of weakness elsewhere. [Wage growth has moderated](#) from last year, and consumers have been able to sustain their spending only by [dipping into savings](#). The U.S. service sector, which includes restaurant dining and travel, slowed its pace of expansion in May, and sales of new homes in April [posted their biggest drop](#) in nine years.

Overall, the data has clouded some asset managers' outlook of the U.S. economy. They are now wary that the Federal Reserve might have to slow the pace of expected interest-rate increases. That might be welcomed by stock investors, who are acutely aware of the risks that rising rates pose for highly valued shares, but its meaning would be murkier in currency markets.

Investors typically buy currencies linked to countries where central banks are raising interest rates to rein in a hot economy. Investors expect the [Fed to lift rates](#) by a total of a percentage point in June and July, but what will follow is harder to determine. As a result, traders now contend that the dollar is more sensitive than usual to economic releases on the horizon.

"The market went through six weeks of thinking the sky's the limit for the Fed," said Steve Englander, head of North American macro strategy at Standard Chartered. Now, he said, "I think the dollar has topped out."

The muddled outlook represents a shift in markets, after investors bet that a rapid pace of rate increases would drive the [dollar higher throughout the year](#). Many expected a strong dollar to hurt U.S. multinationals, by making their products more expensive for foreigners, with companies including [Microsoft](#) Corp. noting a [strong dollar's hit on revenue](#) in recent reports. JPMorgan analysts say the dollar's rise is hurting the U.S. manufacturing sector, which is slowing hiring to compensate for fewer exports.

In the coming week, investors will scrutinize data on the American consumer and Friday's inflation numbers for clues regarding the state of the economy and the trajectory of the stock market. Lower inflation numbers could ease pressure on stocks and hit the dollar more, presaging a more gradual approach from the Fed. The Bank of England sparked [sharp declines in the pound](#) by signaling caution when it raised rates in May.

Investors [are now watching U.S. data](#) for signs of similar slowing. Last week, the Labor Department reported that the [economy added 390,000 jobs](#) in May—above the 328,000 expected by economists. Still, the unemployment rate remained at 3.6%, instead of falling to 3.5% as expected. The monthly increase in average hourly earnings was 0.3%, below the 0.4% consensus forecast.

[Foreign-exchange markets](#) have been their most volatile in over a decade after a surge in the dollar sent other currencies tumbling, and as central banks across the globe tackled soaring inflation. The WSJ Dollar Index's recent decline pared this year's gain to about 6%.

Currencies followed moves in short-term rates, which swung rapidly in March as investors bet the Fed [would raise rates in increments](#) of a half-percentage point or more through at least its July 26-27 meeting. The yield on the benchmark two-year U.S. Treasury note increased by nearly 0.9 percentage point in March alone, its biggest monthly climb since 1989.

Investors are now looking to September, when the central bank is to convene with several months of 2022 data. With officials largely united on the need for half-point increases at the Fed's June and July policy meetings, recent comments from Fed officials show the [debate has shifted](#) to what should happen next. Traders say the dollar is sensitive to any scaling-back of the rate path.

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| | <p>One thing investors are watching is the housing market, trying to gauge the impact of tighter lending conditions. There are signs the U.S. market is cooling as rising mortgage-interest rates make homeownership more expensive. The average rate on a 30-year fixed-rate mortgage was 5.09% last week, up from 3.1% at the start of the year, according to Freddie Mac.</p> <p>Swings in the stock market have made a dent in investment accounts. Higher energy costs could constrain consumer spending, denting growth and hurting the dollar.</p> <p>Andrzej Skiba, head of the BlueBay U.S. fixed-income team at RBC Global Asset Management, is short on the dollar, betting on a decline in its value against other currencies. But he thinks recent concern regarding a recession has gone too far and would consider buying on the dips.</p> <p>“It is not clear that we have seen the end of the secular supremacy of the U.S. economy,” said Mr. Skiba.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/05 Covid surge moves West, eases Northeast |
| SOURCE | https://www.wsj.com/articles/latest-u-s-covid-19-surge-moves-west-as-pressure-eases-in-northeast-11654421402?mod=hp_lead_pos11 |
| GIST | <p>The latest Covid-19 wave in the U.S. has shifted westward, hitting places like the San Francisco area, while pressure eases in recent Northeast hot spots.</p> <p>The Western U.S. region, which includes mountain and coastal states, has recently eclipsed the Northeast to have the nation’s highest rate of known cases per 100,000 people, a Wall Street Journal analysis of CDC data shows. Recent increases in parts of the West come amid declines in the Northeast.</p> <p>There are now 13 California counties, mainly clustered in the central part of the state, which have high community levels based on case and hospital trends, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said in a weekly update Thursday. The agency says people in such places should wear masks in public, indoor settings.</p> <p>An additional 20 California counties covering roughly 60% of the state population are in the CDC’s medium zone, for which the agency advises people including those recently exposed to others with Covid-19 to wear face coverings. This group includes Los Angeles, the nation’s most populous county with about 10 million people.</p> <p>Alameda County in the San Francisco Bay Area on Friday reinstated a mask mandate covering most public, indoor places to limit Covid-19 hospitalizations. It excludes the city of Berkeley.</p> <p>“We cannot ignore the data, and we can’t predict when this wave may end,” county health officer Nicholas Moss said. “Putting our masks back on gives us the best opportunity to limit the impact of a prolonged wave on our communities.”</p> <p>Highly contagious versions of the Omicron variant have been fueling the latest surge. It began in the Northeast in March, disrupting a recovery from a record-breaking winter wave, and has since spread into other regions. A rising number of Florida counties now have high Covid-19 community levels, CDC data show.</p> <p>“The highly transmissible Omicron variants are permeating into all parts of the community,” said Bernadette Boden-Albala, who directs the Program in Public Health at the University of California, Irvine.</p> <p>The U.S. has recently averaged around 100,000 newly reported Covid-19 cases a day, CDC data show, about four times the level seen two months ago. Epidemiologists believe this number vastly understates the true number of cases as more people use at-home tests that public-health departments generally can’t track.</p> |

The five counties that make up New York City all shifted back down to medium Covid-19 community levels in the latest CDC update. City data show sliding numbers for cases, hospitalizations, deaths and the percentage of positive tests.

Boston, too, has seen some numbers trending lower. This might reflect reduced disease transmission and the recent postgraduation exodus from the city's many college campuses, a spokesman for the Boston Public Health Commission said.

One hallmark of the recent wave is widespread infections, but [a muted number of severe cases](#). Hospitalizations have still risen in hot spots but remain near historically low levels. The seven-day moving average for hospitalized confirmed Covid-19 patients was about 24,000 as of Saturday, federal data show, compared with a record topping 150,000 in January. Some of these numbers represent patients who test positive after they are admitted for other reasons.

Newly reported Covid-19-related deaths have also recently held near historic lows, though with an [increased concentration among seniors](#).

Some epidemiologists and physicians say the U.S., both in policy and practice, has become too lax about the danger of rising cases, treating them as mild when they remain risky to some, including people with compromised immune systems. [There is also a risk](#) infected people will suffer from [long-running symptoms](#), including fatigue and cognitive difficulties.

"Cases themselves still lead to people being sick, out of work, not able to do things," said Abraar Karan, an infectious-diseases fellow at Stanford University's Division of Infectious Diseases and Geographic Medicine. "Having big surges is still a big problem."

Meantime, scientists are watching other Omicron subvariants that haven't yet hit the U.S. hard, but have the potential to outcompete the version, known as BA.2.12.1, currently linked to most cases, said Eric Topol, director of the Scripps Research Translational Institute in La Jolla, Calif. This makes it difficult to determine whether the current surge is starting to plateau nationally, he said.

"I think it's too early to make that call," he said.

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| HEADLINE | 06/05 Weary Russians yearn return to normal life |
| SOURCE | https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/06/05/russia-war-public-opinion/ |
| GIST | <p>RIGA, Latvia — For Russia's urban middle class, the war on Ukraine has messed up plans, ruined longed-for vacations and stripped away joys like shopping for a favorite foreign clothing brand, turning the key in a new Japanese car, even biting into a Big Mac.</p> <p>As the war drags on, many yearn for life to go back to normal, before prices went crazy and foreign companies quit the country over Russia's invasion. But these Russians are equally sure that President Vladimir Putin will keep on fighting until he wins, because that's what he always does.</p> <p>After convincing the majority of the population that the war was necessary to "liberate" Ukrainians from "Nazis," state television propagandists are now doggedly preparing Russians for a long war, ominously warning that it might end in nuclear war.</p> <p>In Ukraine, that means more civilian casualties, bombed houses and dozens of soldiers killed daily defending the country's east.</p> <p>Russian hardships may be trivial by contrast, but the deadening gloom of a long war worries the Kremlin, according to analysts, because of the challenge of dragging the population along as sanctions bite, businesses retrench, prices continue to surge, and it dawns on people that life may never go back to the way it was.</p> |

But the old Kremlin playbook, accusing the West of plans to gobble up Russia, is working so far. Denis Volkov of independent polling agency Levada-Center said the latest polling for April showed almost half of Russians unconditionally support the war and about 30 percent support it with reservations, with 19 percent opposed. Many in focus groups saw it as an existential confrontation with the West, not Ukraine.

“People explain that a significant part of the world is against us and it’s only Putin who hopes to hold onto Russia, otherwise we would be eaten up completely. To them it is Russia that is defending itself,” he said.

The conflict, however, is taking a toll on Russians like Marina, 57, a language teacher, whose friends are so weary of the war, they avoid the topic. She succeeded in changing the minds of a few friends and relatives who supported the war. “But in general, it seems everyone is sick and tired of the war or special operation. People have their own problems and the main problem is survival, especially with the rising prices.”

Marina acknowledged that few Russians are opposed to the war and most are finding a way to “get by somehow.” But she added: “This ‘somehow’ is becoming boring. Most people got tired of it. I want to travel. Others want to be able to plan. We want to get back to our ordinary lives.”

Marina can’t help dreaming wistfully of her old life — just a few months ago. “I want to be able to watch Western movies on Netflix and shop at Uniqlo. I want to travel to Europe on affordable and reliable airlines. I want to be part of the world and not an outcast,” she said.

Many people, still in denial, are struggling to adapt, said Grigory Yudin, professor of political philosophy at the Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences. “The natural question for Russians is not whether I support it or not — nobody asks you, actually — but how do I adapt to this?”

People want certainty about their incomes, travel plans and mortgages. Part of the Moscow elite, including middle-ranking bureaucrats who feel they are Europeans, are not happy about the war, he said, but tend to believe Putin will fight until he wins.

“I think the majority of Russians still honestly believe that this is going on with military success, or at least this is what people want to believe,” Yudin said. He added: “The more-educated people who are more informed and tend to consume information from different sources are not that certain about that. They have significant doubts.”

Volkov said the latest polling showed interest in watching news about the war is beginning to wane, with people in focus groups wishing their lives could go back to the way they were.

“The best scenario is for this to end as soon as possible and then we hope things will go back to normal,” said Ksenia, 50, a bookkeeper at a firm that sells foreign materials and has been hard hit by Western sanctions.

Most of her work colleagues began strongly supporting the war, but lately they avoid the subject, except to complain that ordinary people in Russia always pay the price of government decisions.

“My colleagues have finally started to realize that things are not great. In general, we try not to discuss it because we start to fight. They’re saying, ‘We didn’t start this war and now we have to pay.’”

Her plan to vacation in the United States or Italy this summer is ruined because she cannot get a visa.

“Now I feel as if there’s no future and it’s very depressing.” She ached when McDonalds’ golden arches were removed not for any love of the burgers or fries, but for the idea it represented.

“I’m really upset about McDonald’s, and I really mean it. McDonald’s has always been a symbol of freedom for me. I remember when the first McDonald’s opened in Moscow,” she said recalling the queues in 1990s months before the Soviet Union collapsed. “It felt like the light at the end of the tunnel.”

Putin’s purge of ‘traitors’ scoops up pensioners, foodies and peaceniks

For Ksenia and friends opposed to the war, the worst part is thinking of the Ukrainian civilians, including children, being killed and the women raped by Russian soldiers.

“I can survive without certain clothes. And I think I can survive without Western movies. But the main problem for me is that now Russians are outcasts, with whom nobody will want to shake hands. Psychologically, it’s really hard for me to feel that I’m unwanted everywhere.”

Viktor, a 35-year-old carpenter, says his small business has lost most of its clients, as they’ve been forced to economize. He cannot finish building his own house because he says prices for building materials doubled while his income halved.

Viktor thought war would rage about two months. “Now it will take years, and it’s a disaster. It’s not only losing lives. In the years to come we will be living in poverty and we will be hated again like the fascists in Germany in World War II — like we are the new fascists.”

But 43-year-old Andrei from Moscow sees the war as “God’s plan” and believes Russians are willing to make sacrifices to see it through. A yoga-loving, vegetarian computer programmer, he is not the typical elderly, conservative Putin supporter. He gets his news from one pro-Kremlin blogger and shares a common Russian conviction that Western news of Russian war crimes is “fake.” He declined to give his surname.

“The idea is to remove fascism from Ukraine and to return the civilians who want to live in the U.S.S.R., like before the ’90s,” he said echoing the propaganda.

“Right now we don’t feel any meaningful impact from sanctions,” he added, although many of his friends in IT have fled for Armenia and elsewhere, and he can no longer afford to buy a beloved MacBook computer. Nor can he purchase the new Mazda 6 he had his eyes on; he had been hoping pay about 2 million rubles — five months’ salary — but the price went up to 3 million.

Andrei is convinced that Russia will win the war in a year or so, prices will fall and Apple products will find their way to Russia via the black market. Until then, he says he’ll make sacrifices (but not volunteer to fight.)

“Western people like comfort, they need comfort,” he said. “Russian people may have comfort, or they may not. This is not a problem.”

Political analyst and journalist Fyodor Krasheninnikov said many Russians hope that Ukraine would soon capitulate to Russian military power. “The mood in Russia now is that ‘We want this to be over as soon as possible because we just can’t live like this any longer. We want to get back to normal life,’” he said.

“It’s not that people really like what Putin does,” he continued. “No, but they feel frustration and depression because they cannot change anything. It’s like bad weather. They realize that it’s going to rain every day. But what can they do about it?”

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| HEADLINE | 06/05 Alex forms after drenching South Florida |
| SOURCE | https://www.washingtonpost.com/weather/2022/06/05/tropical-storm-alex-florida-bermuda/ |

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| GIST | <p>The National Hurricane Center declared that the first tropical storm of the Atlantic season formed Sunday, less than a day after its origins deluged South Florida, unloading up to 15 inches of rain and flooding parts of Miami.</p> <p>The storm — named Alex — was born at 2 a.m. Sunday as it zipped into the open Atlantic on a path toward Bermuda, which is under a tropical storm warning.</p> <p>The Hurricane Center says Bermuda could experience tropical storm conditions as soon as late Sunday night, and it predicts 2 to 3 inches of rain through Monday. The storm is 550 miles west of the island and is barreling east-northeast at 23 mph.</p> <p>Although the disturbance that became Alex struggled to organize on its approach to Florida, hostile environmental conditions have since eased. That has allowed Alex's peak winds to leap to 60 mph as of Sunday morning, and they could intensify slightly, according to the Hurricane Center. But it's forecast to weaken once it moves over cooler waters Monday into Tuesday.</p> <p>Alex will probably unleash stronger winds on Bermuda than its origins did in Florida, but it is unlikely to create the kind of mess it left behind in Miami because it is moving much more swiftly.</p> <p>Even though it wasn't a named storm while passing South Florida, the slow-moving conglomeration of thunderstorms unloaded up to 15 inches of rain over two days. In downtown Miami, the torrents turned some streets into rivers, submerging and stranding scores of vehicles.</p> <p>The tropical rainstorm prompted flash flood warnings, while rain fell at up to 2 to 3 inches per hour.</p> <p>The National Weather Service received reports of nearly 15 inches of rain in Hollywood and Margate. Miami International Airport registered about 9 inches of rain — or roughly an entire month's worth.</p> <p>Social media documented some unusual scenes: Fish swam through a flooded parking garage, and a man and a dog were separately seen being pulled through the streets on surfboards.</p> <p>Flooding was also reported in many areas outside Miami, sometimes seeping into homes and businesses.</p> <p>In western and central Cuba, at least two people died in floodwaters.</p> <p>The disturbance that became Alex drew in the remnants of Hurricane Agatha, which struck southern Mexico a week ago as the country's most intense May storm on record. At least nine people died there in the flooding and mudslides.</p> <p>Alex kicks off what is forecast to be the seventh straight more-active-than-normal hurricane season in the Atlantic. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is predicting 14 to 21 named storms and six to 10 hurricanes.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/04 TSA ends May with flurry firearm detections |
| SOURCE | https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/transportation/may-ends-with-a-flurry-of-firearm-detections-for-tsa/ |
| GIST | <p>Despite facing penalties, travelers continue to arrive at airport checkpoints with firearms, most of which are loaded. Vigilant Transportation Security Administration (TSA) officers are also alert to the insider threat, evidenced by a catch at Pittsburgh International Airport recently.</p> <p>TSA officers at Washington Dulles International Airport prevented a Culpeper, Va., man from bringing a loaded revolver onto his flight on May 31. The .38 caliber handgun was loaded with five bullets. The weapon was caught as the man entered the security checkpoint. The gun was found among the traveler's carry-on items via the X-ray machine. TSA officials notified the Metropolitan Washington Airports</p> |

Authority police who confiscated the gun and cited the man on a weapons charge. He told officials that he forgot that he had his loaded gun with him.

It was the second gun stopped at one of the airport checkpoints in the last five days. On May 27, a TSA officer at the airport prevented a Fauquier County, Va., woman from bringing a handgun onto her flight. The 9mm handgun was not loaded, however it was accompanied by a gun magazine loaded with eight bullets. TSA officials again notified the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority police who confiscated the gun and cited the woman on a weapons charge.

“Carrying a loaded gun to an airport is an accident waiting to happen,” said Scott T. Johnson, TSA’s Federal Security Director for the airport. “Passengers are not to have access to a gun during a flight. Responsible gun owners know the right way to transport a firearm for a flight.”

So far this year, eight firearms have been stopped by TSA officers at Washington Dulles checkpoints. This is significantly less than the 30 detected for the whole of 2021, bucking a trend seen at some other airports such as Boston Logan, which is seeing a higher rate of detection than last year. However, Dulles’ total of eight guns as of May 31 is still ahead of previous years with between 10 and 16 being stopped annually in the years 2017 to 2020.

Boston Logan TSA officers stopped the sixth firearm for the month on May 31. TSA officers detected the firearm in a passenger’s backpack during security screening in Terminal A. TSA immediately alerted the Massachusetts State Police, who upon inspection discovered the firearm was loaded with a round chambered and another eight rounds in the magazine. After questioning, police officers confiscated the firearm and informed the New Hampshire resident he would receive a summons in the mail.

On May 27, TSA officers at Pittsburgh International Airport prevented a traveler from bringing his loaded handgun onto a flight. The 9mm handgun was loaded with eight bullets including one in the chamber. When the TSA officer spotted the gun in the checkpoint X-ray machine, the Allegheny County Police were alerted, confiscated the handgun and arrested the man on a weapons charge. The man did not have a valid permit to carry a firearm.

A few days later, an individual who works at Pittsburgh International Airport was stopped with a loaded handgun when TSA officers detected the gun in the man’s backpack when he reported to work. The man, a resident of nearby Wellsville, Ohio, was caught on May 30 with a 9 mm handgun loaded with 12 bullets, including one in the chamber. The man, an airplane cabin cleaner, had access to the secure area of the airport to perform his job duties. TSA conducts regular checks on individuals who work in the sterile area of the airport to ensure that they do not have any prohibited items that they might use or might hand off to someone else for their use.

“Insider threats are something that we are highly aware of and are constantly on the lookout for,” said Karen Keys-Turner, TSA’s Federal Security Director for the airport. “Insiders, or individuals with authorized access to sensitive areas of an airport, might misuse or allow others to misuse their access to exploit vulnerabilities in an effort to compromise security, facilitate criminal activity, terrorism or other illicit actions that could inflict harm to people, organizations, the transportation system or national security. This was an excellent catch on the part of our TSA team.”

When the TSA officer spotted the gun in the worker’s backpack, the Allegheny County Police were alerted, confiscated the handgun and arrested the man on a weapons charge.

Meanwhile, TSA officers at Raleigh County Memorial Airport prevented an Alabama man from carrying his handgun onto a flight on May 26. The .380 caliber handgun was not loaded. TSA officers stopped the man when his backpack triggered an alarm in the security checkpoint X-ray unit. It was the first handgun that TSA officers have detected at the airport’s security checkpoint so far this year. Upon spotting the weapon, TSA alerted airport police, who responded to the checkpoint and confiscated the weapon. The man told officials that he forgot that he had placed the gun in his backpack.

On May 27, An Ocean County, N.J., man was arrested by police after TSA officers prevented him from carrying a loaded handgun onto his flight at Newark Liberty International Airport. It was the ninth gun caught at one of the airport checkpoints so far this year, indicating a higher than average detection rate for the airport which saw 12 guns stopped last year and 11 in both 2020 and 2019. The handgun was detected when the TSA officer who was staffing a checkpoint X-ray monitor in Terminal A spotted the weapon inside the man's carry-on bag. TSA officials then alerted Port Authority Police who confiscated the handgun and arrested the man on weapons charges. The man claimed that he forgot that he had placed the firearm into his carry-on bag.

TSA officers at Richmond International Airport prevented a Petersburg, Va., woman from carrying her handgun onto a flight on May 29. The 9mm caliber handgun was loaded with eight bullets, including one in the chamber. TSA officers stopped the woman when her carry-on bag triggered an alarm in the security checkpoint X-ray unit. It was the sixth handgun that TSA officers have detected at the security checkpoints at the airport so far this year, considerably less than the 20 and 22 detected in 2021 and 2020. Upon spotting the weapon, TSA alerted airport police, who responded to the checkpoint, confiscated the handgun and cited the woman on a weapons violation.

And on May 31, TSA officers at Norfolk International Airport stopped a local man from carrying a loaded handgun onto his flight. The 9mm handgun was loaded with 10 bullets. TSA officers stopped the man when his carry-on bags triggered an alarm in the security checkpoint X-ray unit. Upon spotting the gun, TSA alerted the Norfolk Airport Authority Police, who responded to the checkpoint, confiscated the handgun and cited the man on a weapons violation. The case will be forwarded to the Norfolk Commonwealth's Attorney for possible criminal prosecution.

Bringing a gun to an airport checkpoint also carries a federal civil penalty because TSA reserves the right to issue a civil penalty to travelers who have guns and gun parts with them at a checkpoint. Civil penalties for bringing a handgun to a checkpoint can stretch into thousands of dollars, depending on mitigating circumstances. This applies to travelers with or without concealed gun carry permits because even though an individual may have a concealed carry permit, it does not allow for a firearm to be carried onto an airplane.

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| HEADLINE | 06/06 Africa's top-5 conflict hotspots |
| SOURCE | https://africa.businessinsider.com/local/lifestyle/amid-growing-violence-lets-focus-on-africas-top-5-conflict-hotspots-and-how-their/y9ccdbp |
| GIST | <p>On Sunday June 5, 2022, many Nigerians were shocked and outraged when news broke that some unknown gun men had besieged a Catholic Church in the sleepy town of Owo, killing more than 50 congregants and injuring many others. Among the dead were children and the elderly. We've also heard reports of entire families that were wiped out during the onslaught.</p> <p>Events like the Owo tragedy have become commonplace in Africa's most populous country. According to stats obtained from SBM Intelligence, a notable geopolitical research consultancy based in Lagos, about 896 Nigerians have been killed in violent attacks across the country in 2022 alone.</p> <p>Unfortunately, Nigeria is not the only African country where wide-spread violence is taking place. In recent times, Ethiopia has been in the news a lot, albeit for all the wrong reasons. At a point in 2021, the Horn of Africa country was reportedly at risk of being completely destabilised due to armed conflict.</p> <p>Although there has been considerable de-escalation in recent months, the Ethiopian conflict has yet to abate.</p> <p>Indeed, there are many conflict hotspots across the African continent. Whether it be insurgency, militancy, outright terrorism or full-blown war, many African countries are grappling with various forms of conflicts. Sadly, these wars and conflicts continue to be a major cause of poverty in Africa, according to findings by SOS Children's Villages International.</p> |

Highlighted below are the five conflict hotspots in Africa. This list is presented in no particular order of priority.

1. The Ethiopian Conflict

Since 2017, there have been quite a number of active conflicts and secluded killings across Ethiopia. At this point, it has become almost difficult to keep count of all the deaths. In 2021, the conflicts seemed to have heightened following a military offensive against the Tigray Region by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's government.

As you may already know the conflict between the Ethiopian government and Tigrayan forces began after the ruling party requested that the country's election board should cancel an already scheduled 2020 general election, in view of the health risks posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The request was vehemently opposed by the Tigrayans, who went ahead to organise elections for their region. Apparently, the Ethiopian government perceived this as some sort of secessionist had chosen to exercise absolute powers to maintain the territorial integrity of the country.

Between November 2020 and now, both the military and Tigrayan forces have fought actively. In late 2021, there were invasion threats on the capital city of Addis Ababa. And in response, many Western countries advised their citizens to evacuate, even as some international companies temporarily suspended operation and flew out some of their staff.

Ethiopia is a very important country in Africa. It is considered the only African country that was never colonised. It is also Africa's second most populous country besides Nigeria. More so, the headquarters of the Africa Union is located there. So, it is very important to resolve the conflict before it gets out of hands.

The Ethiopian conflict has reportedly displaced more than two million people according to the United Nations.

2. Civil War in Cameroon

Unlike the media spotlight on the Ethiopian conflict, the ongoing civil war in Cameroon doesn't really get a lot of media reportage. And that is mainly due to the government's alleged efforts to hide the carnage from the rest of the world. This notwithstanding, the truth remains that Southern Cameroon has been in turmoil for many months now. There have been allegations of genocide, rape and other atrocities as the government forces continue to battle separatists in Anglophone territories of Ambazonia.

3. Terrorism, banditry and secessionist agitations in Nigeria

For years, Boko Haram terrorists have been terrorising Northern Nigeria. They went from burning places of worship to kidnapping school children and then amassing territories and displacing many people in the process. And then they were incidents of armed herdsmen who often clashed with farmers over destruction of farmlands by cows.

However, as of 2022 the biggest challenge has been that of kidnappings and coordinated violent attacks. Back in March this year, a train heading from Kaduna to Abuja was bombed, with many passengers shot and killed on sight even as dozens were kidnapped. Many of those kidnapped are still in captivity till date.

Interestingly, both the terrorists and bandits have been fingered as responsible for this trend. And no one is spared from their attacks; from innocent secondary school children in their boarding schools to universities and of course travelers on the dangerous highways crisscrossing the country.

Meanwhile, in the Eastern part of the country, secessionists have burnt police stations and election offices as part of their agitation. It has really been a difficult year of conflicts for Nigeria. And this has

resulted in serious economic woes, especially for the average Nigerians who have been impacted directly.

4. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

For years, the DRC has hardly known any peace of peace. It's been one conflict or the other since the first and second civil wars were fought between 1996 and 2003. The conflicts have been fueled by agitations for political control and natural resources.

Just last week, Business Insider Africa reported on the possibility of tension between the DRC and Rwanda, all resulting from the years-long conflict in the central African country.

5. Terrorism in Mozambique

This country in Southern Africa has had a pretty rough year. So many factors, including terrorism natural disaster, have combined to kill hundreds and displaced nearly one million people, even as millions more have been at risk of famine. Earlier in the year, the United Nations said Mozambique is facing a humanitarian catastrophe “beyond epic proportions.”

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| HEADLINE | 06/05 NATO naval drills with Finland, Sweden |
| SOURCE | https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/nato-conducts-naval-exercises-with-finland-and-sweden |
| GIST | <p>HELSINKI (AP) — NATO kicked off nearly a two-week U.S.-led naval exercise on the Baltic Sea on Sunday with more than 7,000 sailors, airmen and marines from 16 nations, including two aspiring to join the military alliance, Finland and Sweden.</p> <p>The annual BALTOPS naval exercise, initiated in 1972, is not held in response to any specific threat. But the military alliance said that “with both Sweden and Finland participating, NATO is seizing the chance in an unpredictable world to enhance its joint force resilience and strength” together with two Nordic aspirant nations.</p> <p>Finland and Sweden both have a long history of military non-alignment before their governments decided to apply to join NATO in May, a direct result of Russia’s Feb. 24 invasion of Ukraine. Over the past years, Moscow has repeatedly warned Helsinki and Stockholm against joining the Western military alliance and warned of retaliatory measures if they did.</p> <p>Ahead of the naval drill, which involved 45 vessels and 75 aircraft, the top U.S military official said in Sweden — the host of the BALTOPS 22 exercise — that it was particularly important for NATO to show support to the governments in Helsinki and Stockholm.</p> <p>“It is important for us, the United States, and the other NATO countries to show solidarity with both Finland and Sweden in this exercise,” U.S. Gen. Mark Milley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said Saturday during a news conference aboard the large amphibious warship USS Kearsarge, which was moored in central Stockholm.</p> <p>Milley, speaking with the Swedish Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson, stressed that the Baltic Sea is a strategically important body of water — “one of the great seaways of the world.”</p> <p>He said from Moscow’s perspective, Finland and Sweden joining NATO will be “very problematic” and leave Russia in a difficult military position as the Baltic Sea’s coastline would be almost completely encircled by NATO members, except for Russia’s Baltic exclave of Kaliningrad and the Russian city of St. Petersburg and its surrounding areas.</p> <p>Turkey, a NATO member that has had good relations with Russia, has objected to Finland and Sweden joining the military alliance, citing their alleged support for a Kurdish group that Turkey labels as terrorist. NATO’s chief has been trying to resolve the dispute.</p> |

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| | <p>The United States has never before moved such a large warship as the 843-foot USS Kearsarge in the Swedish capital, where it sailed through narrow passages in the Stockholm archipelago, Milley said.</p> <p>As NATO's close partners, Finland and Sweden have participated in the naval drill since the mid-1990s.</p> <p>BALTOPS 22 is scheduled to end in the German port of Kiel on June 17.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/06 Normandy D-Day celebrations |
| SOURCE | https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/crowds-honor-wwii-veterans-normandy-day-celebrations-85205896 |
| GIST | <p>COLLEVILLE-SUR-MER, France -- When D-Day veterans set foot on the Normandy beaches and other World War II sites, they express a mix of joy and sadness. Joy at seeing the gratitude and friendliness of the French toward those who landed on June 6, 1944. Sadness as they think of their fallen comrades and of another battle now being waged in Europe: the war in Ukraine.</p> <p>As a bright sun was rising over the wide band of sand of Omaha Beach on Monday, 78 years on, U.S. D-Day veteran Charles Shay expressed thoughts for his comrades who fell that day. "I have never forgotten them and I know that their spirits are here," he told The Associated Press.</p> <p>The 98-year-old Penobscot Native American from Indian Island, Maine, took part in a sage-burning ceremony near the beach in Saint-Laurent-sur-Mer.</p> <p>Shay, who now lives in Normandy, was a 19-year-old U.S. Army medic when he landed on Omaha Beach on June 6, 1944.</p> <p>He said he was sad to see war in Europe once again, so many years later.</p> <p>"Ukraine is a very sad situation. I feel sorry for the people there and I don't know why this war had to come, but I think the human beings like to, I think they like to fight. I don't know," he said.</p> <p>"In 1944 I landed on these beaches and we thought we'd bring peace to the world. But it's not possible."</p> <p>This year, Shay handed over the remembrance task to another Native American, from the Crow tribe, Julia Kelly, a Gulf War veteran, who performed the sage ritual. "Never forget, never forget," she said. "In this time, in any time, war is not good."</p> <p>Shay's message to young generations would be "to be ever vigilant."</p> <p>"Of course I have to say that they should protect their freedom that they have now," he said.</p> <p>For the past two years, D-Day ceremonies were reduced to a minimum amid COVID-19 lockdown restrictions.</p> <p>This year, crowds of French and international visitors — including veterans in their 90s — are back in Normandy to pay tribute to the nearly 160,000 troops from Britain, the U.S., Canada and elsewhere who landed there to bring freedom.</p> <p>Several thousand people were expected Monday at a ceremony later at the American Cemetery overlooking Omaha Beach in the French town of Colleville-sur-Mer. Amid the dozens of U.S. veterans expected to attend was Ray Wallace, 97, a former paratrooper with the 82nd Airborne Division.</p> <p>On D-Day, his plane was hit and caught fire, forcing him to jump earlier than expected. He landed 20 miles (32 kilometers) away from the town of Sainte-Mere-Eglise, the first French village to be liberated from Nazi occupation.</p> |

"We all got a little scared then. And then whenever the guy dropped us out, we were away from where the rest of the group was. That was scary," Wallace told The Associated Press.

Less than a month later, he was taken prisoner by the Germans. He was ultimately liberated after 10 months and returned to the U.S.

Still, Wallace thinks he was lucky.

"I remember the good friends that I lost there. So it's a little emotional," he said, with sadness in his voice. "I guess you can say I'm proud of what I did but I didn't do that much."

He was asked about the secret to his longevity. "Calvados!" he joked, in reference to Normandy's local alcohol.

On D-Day, Allied troops landed on the beaches code-named Omaha, Utah, Juno, Sword and Gold, carried by 7,000 boats. On that single day, 4,414 Allied soldiers lost their lives, 2,501 of them Americans. More than 5,000 were wounded.

On the German side, several thousand were killed or wounded.

Wallace, who is using a wheelchair, was among about 20 WWII veterans who opened Saturday's parade of military vehicles in Sainte-Mere-Eglise to great applause from thousands of people, in a joyful atmosphere. He did not hide his pleasure, happily waving to the crowd as parents explained the achievements of World War II heroes to their children.

Many history buffs, wearing military and civilian clothes from the period, also came to stage a reenactment of the events.

In Colleville-sur-Mer on Monday, U.S. Air Force aircraft are to fly over the American Cemetery during the commemoration ceremony, in the presence of Army Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The place is home to the gravesites of 9,386 people who died fighting on D-Day and in the operations that followed.

For 82-year-old Dale Thompson, visiting the site over the weekend was a first.

Thompson, who traveled from Florida with his wife, served in the 101st Airborne Division of the U.S. military in the early 1960s. He was stateside and saw no combat.

Walking amid the thousands of marble headstones, Thompson wondered how he would have reacted if he landed at D-Day.

"I try to put myself in their place," he said. "Could I be as heroic as these people?"

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| HEADLINE | 06/05 US: Russia selling plundered Ukraine grain |
| SOURCE | https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/05/world/africa/ukraine-grain-russia-sales.html |
| GIST | <p>NAIROBI, Kenya — Russia has bombed, blockaded and plundered the grain production capacity of Ukraine, which accounts for one-tenth of global wheat exports, resulting in dire forecasts of increased hunger and of spiking food prices around the world.</p> <p>Now, the United States has warned that the Kremlin is trying to profit from that plunder by selling stolen wheat to drought-stricken countries in Africa, some facing possible famine.</p> |

In mid-May, the United States sent an alert to 14 countries, mostly in Africa, that Russian cargo vessels were leaving ports near Ukraine laden with what a State Department cable described as “stolen Ukrainian grain.” The cable identified by name three Russian cargo vessels it said were suspected of transporting it.

The American alert about the grain has only sharpened the dilemma for African countries, many already feeling trapped between East and West, as they potentially face a hard choice between, on one hand, benefiting from possible war crimes and displeasing a powerful Western ally, and on the other, refusing cheap food at a time when wheat prices are soaring and hundreds of thousands of people are starving.

The alarm sounded by Washington reinforced Ukrainian government accusations that Russia has stolen up to 500,000 tons of Ukrainian wheat, worth \$100 million, since Russia’s invasion in February. Much of it has been trucked to ports in Russia-controlled Crimea, then transferred to ships, including some under Western sanctions, Ukrainian officials say.

On Friday, the head of the African Union, President Macky Sall of Senegal, met in Russia with President Vladimir V. Putin, in an effort to secure grain supplies from the country.

Critics said the trip, during which Mr. Sall referred to his “dear friend Vladimir,” played straight into Mr. Putin’s hands by offering him yet another tool to leverage divisions in the international response to his brutal assault on Ukraine.

But [many African nations are already ambivalent](#) about the punishing Western campaign of sanctions against Russia for reasons that include their dependence on Russian arms sales, lingering Cold War-era sympathies and perceptions of Western double standards.

On top of that, the continent is suffering badly.

Russia and Ukraine normally supply about 40 percent of wheat needs in Africa, where prices for the grain have risen 23 percent in the past year, the United Nations says. In the Horn of Africa region, a devastating drought has left 17 million people hungry, mostly in parts of Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya, according to the United Nations. More than 200,000 people in Somalia are on the brink of famine.

Faced with such pressing need, many African countries are unlikely to hesitate before buying Russian-supplied grain, no matter where it comes from, said Hassan Khannenje, director of the HORN International Institute for Strategic Studies, a research body in Kenya.

“This is not a dilemma,” Mr. Khannenje said. “Africans don’t care where they get their food from, and if someone is going to moralize about that, they are mistaken.”

“The need for food is so severe,” he added, “that it’s not something they need to debate.”

Ukrainian officials said the solution to Africa’s food problem is greater global pressure to end the war, not purchases of looted grain. There is a “simple answer,” Taras Vysotsky, Ukraine’s deputy minister of agriculture, said: “Stop the fighting.”

Mr. Vysotsky and other Ukrainian ministers have been accusing Russia for months of stealing grain from the territories it occupies in the country’s southern breadbasket, described by one as “outright robbery.” Much of it has been taken from storage elevators in occupied parts of the Zaporizhzhia, Kherson, Donetsk and Luhansk regions, they say.

“There is nothing left to steal,” Mr. Vysotsky said in an interview.

The first reports of grain plunder emerged in mid-March. Commentators on Russian state TV stations have since openly boasted about the seizures, saying that Russia intends to continue with them.

The Russians also stole an estimated \$15 million to \$20 million worth of agricultural machinery, Mr. Vysotsky said.

Much of the looted grain, according to Ukrainian officials, ends up at ports like Sevastopol on the Crimean peninsula, which Russia has occupied since 2014.

In late April, [video surfaced](#) of columns of covered trucks driving what Ukrainian officials said was captured grain. In an analysis of the video, The New York Times confirmed it was taken [in the Russian-occupied city of Melitopol](#), showing the convoy headed southwest on a main road toward Crimea.

At least 10 boats have exported stolen grain, mostly wheat, through Sevastopol's port since late February, according to the Ukrainians who are tracking shipments on the SeaKrim project run by the open-source investigation website Myrotvorets.

Marine tracking websites, and experts who monitor the vessels, said the ships, some [under U.S. sanctions](#) since April, often turn off their transponders until they are at sea, likely to hide their port of departure. But they still show up in satellite images or are photographed by spotters on the ground.

In the past month, the three Russian vessels identified in the State Department cable as suspected carriers of stolen Ukrainian grain — the Matros Koshka, Matros Pozynich and Mikhail Nenashev — traveled between the Straits of Kerch, which divide Crimea and Russia, and various ports in the eastern Mediterranean.

Sometimes they docked in Turkey or Syria; other times, according to websites that track marine traffic, they turned off their transponders while crossing the Mediterranean, possibly to hide their final destination.

Two U.S. officials confirmed the contents of the cable, which was sent on May 16 to 14 countries, mostly in northern and eastern Africa, as well as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Turkey.

Determining the provenance of a grain shipment is not straightforward, but one indication might be if Russia were selling it at a heavy discount, one American official said.

In an email, a State Department spokesman declined to comment on the cable's contents, but pointed to the Ukrainian reports of wholesale grain theft, as well as "numerous testimonies from Ukrainian farmers and documentary evidence showing Russia's theft of Ukrainian grain."

"The United States is working with other countries to prevent the sale of grain that has likely been stolen from Ukraine," the spokesman said.

Several foreign officials said the United States had asked them to ensure their country did not buy stolen Ukrainian grain, with the request made in a spirit of cooperation, not coercion. In Pakistan, which is considering buying two million tons of wheat from Russia, a senior foreign office official said the Americans stressed Pakistan's sovereignty when they asked for help.

Turkey is a focus of the efforts to track stolen Ukrainian grain because Russian vessels leaving Crimea usually pass through Turkish waters. On Friday, Ukraine's ambassador to Turkey called on the authorities to investigate the source of Russian-transported grain.

A spokesman for Turkey's Foreign Ministry did not respond to a request for comment.

In Washington, a spokesman for the National Security Council said the United States had information that Russian forces had been regularly damaging facilities used to hold grain in eastern Ukraine.

On top of that, a Russian naval blockade has prevented Ukraine from exporting the wheat it still has. Ukrainian officials say about 20 million tons of grain are waiting for export in the Ukrainian-held port of Odesa.

The National Security Council provided a declassified map showing clusters of Russian warships in the Black Sea south of Odesa preventing Ukrainian cargo ships from leaving.

For many Ukrainians, the theft of the grain — and its unlawful export — recall the traumatic famine of 1932-33 when Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union, and Ukrainian peasants had their grain expropriated. Four million people died, in the hunger known as the Holodomor.

Throughout the Ukraine crisis, many African countries have felt treated as an afterthought, caught between foreign powers engaged in a new round of Cold War-style rivalry. Over the weekend, several refused to discuss the American alert about stolen Ukrainian grain.

Macharia Kamau, the principal secretary at the Kenyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, denied Kenya had received any message. “Why would they need to warn us in the first place?” he texted. “Why would anyone buy looted anything? This sounds like a propaganda ploy.”

Mindi Kasiga, a spokeswoman at Tanzania’s Foreign Ministry, said her country’s stance “has always been neutral.”

Across much of Africa, any Western pressure over Russian-supplied grain is likely to backfire, said Mr. Khannenje, the analyst, unless the West could offer a means of bridging the wheat shortfall.

“If the West can provide alternatives, countries will listen to that,” he said. “But being hysterical about it is only going to push them further into the arms of Russia.”

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| HEADLINE | 06/05 Wagner Group getting rich in Sudan |
| SOURCE | https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/05/world/africa/wagner-russia-sudan-gold-putin.html |
| GIST | <p>AL-IBEDIYYA, Sudan — In a scorched, gold-rich area 200 miles north of the Sudanese capital, where fortunes spring from desert-hewn rock, a mysterious foreign operator dominates the business.</p> <p>Locals call it “The Russian Company” — a tightly guarded plant with shining towers, deep in the desert, that processes mounds of dusty ore into bars of semirefined gold.</p> <p>“The Russians pay the best,” said Ammar al-Amir, a miner and community leader in al-Ibediyya, a hardscrabble mining town 10 miles from the plant. “Otherwise, we don’t know much about them.”</p> <p>In fact, Sudanese company and government records show, the gold mine is one outpost of the Wagner Group, an opaque network of Russian mercenaries, mining companies and political influence operations — controlled by a close ally of President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia — that is expanding aggressively across a swath of Africa.</p> <p>Best known as a supplier of hired guns, Wagner has in recent years evolved into a far broader and more sophisticated tool of Kremlin power, according to experts and Western officials tracking its expansion. Rather than a single entity, Wagner has come to describe interlinked war-fighting, moneymaking and influence-peddling operations, low-cost and deniable, that serve Mr. Putin’s ambitions on a continent where support for Russia is relatively high.</p> <p>Wagner emerged in 2014 as a band of Kremlin-backed mercenaries that supported Mr. Putin’s first foray into eastern Ukraine, and that later deployed to Syria. In recent months, at least 1,000 of its fighters have re-emerged in Ukraine, British intelligence has said.</p> |

The linchpin of Wagner's operations, according to Western officials, is [Yevgeny V. Prigozhin](#), a Russian oligarch known as "Putin's chef" who was indicted in the United States on charges of meddling in the 2016 presidential election.

In 2017, Wagner expanded into Africa, where its mercenaries have become a significant, sometimes pivotal factor in a string of conflict-hit countries: [Libya](#), Mozambique, [Central African Republic](#) and most recently Mali where, as elsewhere, Wagner has been [accused of atrocities](#) against civilians.

But Wagner is far more than a war machine in Africa, and a close look at its activities in Sudan, the continent's third largest gold producer, reveals its reach.

Wagner has obtained lucrative Sudanese mining concessions that produce a stream of gold, records show — a potential boost to the Kremlin's \$130 billion gold stash that American officials worry is being used to blunt the effect of economic sanctions over the Ukraine war, by propping up the ruble.

In eastern Sudan, Wagner is supporting the Kremlin's push to build a naval base on the Red Sea to host its nuclear-powered warships. In western Sudan, it has found a launchpad for its mercenary operations in neighboring countries — and a possible source of uranium.

And since Sudan's military seized power in a coup in October, Wagner has intensified its partnership with a power-hungry commander, Lt. Gen. Mohamed Hamdan, who visited Moscow in the early days of the Ukraine war, which began in February. Wagner has given military aid to General Hamdan and helped Sudan's security forces to suppress a fragile grass-roots, pro-democracy movement, Western officials say.

"Russia feeds off kleptocracy, civil wars and internecine conflicts in Africa, filling vacuums where the West is not engaged or not interested," said Samuel Ramani of the Royal United Services Institute, a defense research group in London, and the author of a forthcoming book on Russia in Africa.

Sudan, Mr. Ramani added, typifies the kind of country where Wagner thrives.

The Kremlin and Mr. Prigozhin deny any links to Wagner, which is said to be named after Richard Wagner, Hitler's favorite composer, by a founding commander who was fascinated by Nazi symbolism and history.

Mr. Prigozhin shrouds his activities in secrecy, trying to mask his ties to Wagner through a web of shell companies and traveling the African continent by private jet for meetings with presidents and military commanders. But the U.S. Treasury Department and experts who track Mr. Prigozhin's activities say that he owns or controls most, if not all, of the companies that make up Wagner.

And as his operations in Sudan show, those companies have left a paper trail.

Russian and Sudanese customs and corporate records, obtained through the Center for Advanced Defense Studies, a nonprofit in Washington, as well as mining documents, flight records and interviews with Western and Sudanese officials, reveal the extent of his business empire in Sudan — and the particular importance of gold.

The Wagner Group has "spread a trail of lies and human rights abuses" across Africa, and Mr. Prigozhin is its "manager and financier," the State Department said [in a statement on May 24](#).

Most officials spoke about Mr. Prigozhin and Wagner on the condition of anonymity, citing the confidentiality of their work or, in some cases, fears for their safety. General Hamdan and Mubarak Ardol, Sudan's state regulator for mining, declined to be interviewed.

In [a lengthy written response](#) to questions, Mr. Prigozhin denied any mining interests in Sudan, denounced American sanctions against him and rejected, with a hint of a wink, the very existence of the group he is famously associated with.

“I, unfortunately, have never had gold mining companies,” he said. “And I am not a Russian military man. “The Wagner legend,” he added, “is just a legend.”

The ‘Key to Africa’

Wagner’s operations in Sudan began in 2017 after a meeting in the Russian coastal resort of Sochi.

After nearly three decades of autocratic rule, President Omar Hassan al-Bashir of Sudan was losing his grip on power. At a meeting with Mr. Putin in Sochi, he sought a new alliance, proposing Sudan as Russia’s [“key to Africa”](#) in return for help, according to the Kremlin’s transcript of their remarks.

Mr. Putin snapped up the offer.

Within weeks, Russian geologists and mineralogists employed by Meroe Gold, a new Sudanese company, began to arrive in Sudan, according to commercial flight records obtained by the Dossier Center, a London-based investigative body, and verified by researchers at the Center for Advanced Defense Studies.

The Treasury Department says that Meroe Gold is controlled by Mr. Prigozhin, and it [imposed sanctions](#) on the company in 2020 as part of a raft of measures targeting Wagner in Sudan. Meroe’s director in Sudan, Mikhail Potepkin, was previously employed by the Internet Research Agency, the Prigozhin-financed troll factory accused of meddling in the 2016 United States election, the Treasury Department said.

Meroe Gold’s geologists were followed by Russian defense officials, who opened negotiations over a potential Russian naval base on the Red Sea — a strategic prize for the Kremlin, suddenly within reach.

Over the next 18 months, Meroe Gold imported 131 shipments into Sudan, Russian customs records show — mining and construction equipment, but also military trucks, amphibious vehicles and two transport helicopters. One of the helicopters was photographed a year later in Central African Republic, where Wagner fighters were protecting the country’s president, and where Mr. Prigozhin had [acquired lucrative diamond mining concessions](#).

Incongruously, the shipments also included a vintage American car — a 1956 Cadillac Series Sixty-Two, documents show.

But the Russians soon found themselves advising Mr. al-Bashir on how to save his skin. As a popular revolt surged from late 2018, threatening to topple his government, Wagner advisers sent a memo urging the Sudanese government to run a social media campaign to discredit the protesters. The memo even advised Mr. al-Bashir to publicly execute a few protesters as a warning to others.

This memo and other documents were obtained by the Dossier Center, which is financed by Mikhail B. Khodorkovsky, a former oil oligarch and a longtime nemesis of Mr. Putin’s. Through interviews with officials and business leaders in Sudan, The New York Times confirmed key information in the documents, which the Dossier Center said were provided by sources inside the Prigozhin organization.

When Mr. al-Bashir was [ousted by his own generals](#) and placed under house arrest in April 2019, the Russians swiftly changed course.

A week later, Mr. Prigozhin’s jet arrived in Sudan’s capital, Khartoum, carrying a delegation of senior Russian military officials. It returned to Moscow with senior Sudanese defense officials, including a brother of General Hamdan, who was then emerging as a power broker, [according to flight data](#) obtained by the Russian newspaper Novaya Gazeta.

Six weeks later, on June 3, 2019, General Hamdan’s troops launched a bloody operation to disperse pro-democracy protesters from central Khartoum in which [at least 120 people](#) were killed over the next two weeks. On June 5, Mr. Prigozhin’s company, Meroe Gold, imported 13 tons of riot shields, as well as

helmets and batons for a company controlled by General Hamdan's family, customs and company documents show.

Around that time, a Russian disinformation campaign using fake social media accounts sought to exacerbate political divisions in Sudan — a technique similar to the one used by the Internet Research Agency to meddle in the 2016 U.S. election. Facebook shut down 172 of those accounts in [October 2019](#) and [May 2021](#), linking them directly to Mr. Prigozhin.

But neither those measures nor the American sanctions deterred the Wagner Group from its main goal — capturing a slice of Sudan's gold boom.

The Gold Miners

Poor men hoping to strike it big stream to al-Ibediyya, the gold mining town north of Khartoum, on the banks of the Nile.

After hacking gold-rich rock from the desert, they bring it to be crushed at the town's ramshackle market, extracting gold using a crude, mercury-based technique that poses great risks to their health.

But far greater profits can be earned by running the same ore through a second, more complex gold extraction process at a cluster of industrial plants 10 miles away. One of the largest is run by Meroe Gold.

In interviews, traders described how Russians come to the market to take samples and buy gold ore, paying up to \$3,600 for a nine-ton truckload. Sometimes, they said, the Russians were protected by troops from General Hamdan's Rapid Support Forces.

When a team from The Times approached the gate of the Meroe plant, Ahmed Abdelmoneim, a Sudanese engineer, wanted to be helpful. About 30 Russians and 70 Sudanese worked there, he said, motioning to the living quarters, workshops and gleaming metal towers. The Russians were unlikely to speak with a reporter because of the company's reputed "link to Wagner," which he dismissed as untrue.

Before he could elaborate, a message in Russian crackled over the radio. A small bus pulled up outside, driven by an athletic-looking white man who wore shorts, sunglasses and a khaki-green T-shirt. He avoided eye contact with our team.

The bus drove away with Mr. Abdelmoneim, and we were invited to leave.

Gold production in Sudan soared after 2011, when South Sudan seceded and took with it most of its oil wealth, but only a handful of Sudanese have gotten rich. General Hamdan's family [dominates the gold trade](#), experts and Sudanese officials say, and about 70 percent of Sudan's production is smuggled out, according to Central Bank of Sudan estimates obtained by The Times.

Most of it passes through the United Arab Emirates, the main hub for undeclared African gold. Western officials say that Russian-produced gold has likely been smuggled out this way, allowing producers to avoid government taxes and possibly even the share of the proceeds that is owed to the Sudanese government.

"You can walk into the U.A.E. with a handbag full of gold, and they will not ask you any questions," said Lakshmi Kumar of Global Financial Integrity, a Washington-based nonprofit that researches illicit financial flows.

Halting the flow of Russian gold has become a priority for Western governments. In March, the Treasury Department [threatened sanctions](#) on anyone who helps Mr. Putin launder the \$130 billion stash in Russia's central bank.

Some Sudanese gold might be going directly to Moscow.

From February to June 2021, Sudanese anticorruption officials tracked 16 Russian cargo flights that landed in Port Sudan from Latakia, Syria. Some flights, operated by the Russian military's 223rd Flight Unit, originated near Moscow. The Times was able to verify most of those flights using flight-tracking services.

Suspecting the planes were being used to smuggle gold, the officials raided one flight before it took off on June 23. But as they were about to break open its cargo, a Sudanese general intervened, citing an order from Sudan's leader, Lt. Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, said a former senior anticorruption official who spoke on the condition of anonymity to avoid reprisals.

The plane was moved to the military section of the airport, he said, and left for Syria a couple of hours later without being searched.

The anticorruption body, set up to dismantle Mr. al-Bashir's network inside Sudan, was disbanded five months later, after October's military coup.

General al-Burhan declined to be interviewed for this article. Lt. Gen. Ibrahim Gabir, a fellow member of the ruling Sovereignty Council, played down accounts of Russian smuggling.

"People are talking," he said. "But you need evidence."

From Russia With Cookies

[Since 2016](#), the United States has imposed no fewer than [seven rounds of sanctions](#) on Mr. Prigozhin and his network, and the F.B.I. is offering a [\\$250,000 reward](#) for information leading to his arrest. Those measures have done little to stem his expansion in Africa, where he sometimes feels emboldened to flaunt his ties.

In a splashy bid for Sudanese support, Mr. Prigozhin donated 198 tons of food to poor Sudanese last year during the holiday month of Ramadan. "A gift from Yevgeny Prigozhin," read the packets of rice, sugar and lentils, under a slogan that recalled the depths of the Cold War: "From Russia With Love."

The donation, made through a subsidiary of Meroe Gold, included 28 tons of cookies that had been specially imported from Russia. "They were meant for children, but everyone enjoyed them," said Musa Gismilla, the head of the Sudanese charity that distributed the aid.

But there was a hitch. Mr. Prigozhin insisted on diverting 10 tons of the food to Port Sudan, where Russia was lobbying for naval access, instead of to more needy regions. Mr. Gismilla was disturbed.

"It suggested the gesture was more about politics than humanitarianism," he said.

In his response to The Times, Mr. Prigozhin wrote that he had "nothing to do with Meroe Gold," yet added that he had learned that the company was "currently in liquidation."

He confirmed the charity donation, which he said was at the behest of a Sudanese woman with whom he had "friendly, comradely, working and sexual relations" — apparently a mocking explanation most likely to cause particular offense in a conservative Muslim society.

Wagner's main military ally in Sudan, General Hamdan, is also reaching for public support. Since betraying his onetime patron, Mr. al-Bashir, in 2019, General Hamdan has sought to distance himself from his reputation as a ruthless commander in the Darfur conflict that led to an estimated 300,000 civilian deaths in the 2000s.

Instead, Mr. Hamdan has signaled his ambition to lead Sudan, building a support base among traditional leaders he has courted using money and vehicles, diplomats said, and with friendly foreign powers like Russia.

Two senior Western officials said that Wagner organized General Hamdan's February visit to Moscow, where he arrived on the eve of the war in Ukraine. Although the trip was ostensibly to discuss an economic aid package, they said, General Hamdan arrived with gold bullion on his plane, and asked Russian officials for help in acquiring armed drones.

Image

On his return to Sudan a week later, General Hamdan [announced that he had "no problem"](#) with Russia opening a base on the Red Sea.

Supporting a Coup 'to Steal Gold'

The murkiest part of Wagner's Sudan drive is in Darfur, [a region riven by conflict](#) and rich in uranium. There, Russian fighters can slip into bases controlled by General Hamdan's Rapid Support Forces, Western and United Nations officials say — and sometimes use the bases to cross into Central African Republic, Libya and parts of Chad.

This year, a team of Russian geologists visited Darfur to assess its uranium potential, one Western official said.

Since the war in Ukraine began, Russian disinformation networks in Sudan have churned out nine times as much fake news as before, trying to generate support for the Kremlin, said Amil Khan of Valent Projects, a London-based company that monitors disinformation flows.

That message is not welcomed by everyone. Several protests against Meroe Gold operations have erupted in mining areas. A Sudanese YouTube personality known only as "the fox" has attracted large audiences with [videos](#) that purport to lift the lid on Wagner's activities. And pro-democracy demonstrators theorize that Moscow was behind last October's military takeover of the Sudanese government.

"Russia supported the coup," read an unsigned poster that appeared in Khartoum recently, "so it could steal our gold."

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| HEADLINE | 06/04 Trucker's haven on precipice of change |
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| SOURCE | https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/04/business/truck-driver-shortage-support.html |
| GIST | <p>The Petro Travel Center on Interstate 10 in Ontario, Calif., is one of scores across the country. At the front of the building are the things road trippers see when they stop for gas or snacks: a convenience store, restrooms and some dining options.</p> <p>But for truckers, Petro is a haven.</p> <p>An entrance opens to kiosks and services catering directly to those who work out of the cab of a big rig. There are showers, a driver's lounge, a gym and a laundromat. A brightly lit game area features arcade machines and a pool table. Outside the stop there is a chapel in a trailer.</p> <p>"For the next 34 hours I'm going to do laundry, catch up on some reading, take a shower — basically just like what anybody else would do if they were home for the weekend," Bryan Tyson Galbreath, 41, of Corpus Christi, Texas, said. "I'm away from my house, but that truck is technically my house."</p> <p>Mr. Galbreath is one of at least 550,000 long-haul truck drivers in the United States, underpinning an industry that has been hailed as indispensable during the pandemic even while facing a severe shortage of drivers. That shortage has coincided with supply chain issues, adding pressure on drivers to reach their destinations on time.</p> <p>The industry is also on the precipice of a huge change. The driver shortages are reshaping the work force, as the specter of self-driving trucks increasingly threatens to transform how the work is done. Self-driving</p> |

trucks are being tested now and are viewed as the future for shipping all manner of goods across the country.

As trucking evolves, the patchwork of businesses across the United States that exist to support the industry is at risk of disappearing.

There are no figures on how many people work in the various professions that support the trucking industry, but it takes an army of truck washers, gas station cashiers and truck stop custodial staff to help drivers and their cargoes get from Point A to B.

Restrictions control how long they can drive, down to the minute, a reason Mr. Galbreath is spending 34 hours in the truck stop's orbit.

Because of the dangers associated with having exhausted drivers at the wheel, various federal rules have taken effect since the 1930s. The current set of rules, enacted in 2013, are complicated. Depending on their companies' operating hours, truckers are allowed to drive a maximum of 60 hours over seven days or 70 hours over eight days. So drivers on these schedules can set their time back to zero with so-called reset breaks. These 34-hour off-duty periods are often spent at truck stops.

"If you're at a truck stop, you're pretty much stuck there," Mr. Galbreath said.

In the parking areas, the drivers nestle their trucks in tightly packed rows. Their cabs function as kitchens, bedrooms, living rooms and offices. At night, drivers can be seen through their windshields — eating dinner or reclining in their bunks, bathed in the light of a Nintendo Switch or FaceTime call home.

Small truck stops have just a few parking spots. By contrast, [the Iowa 80 Truck stop](#), in Walcott, Iowa, bills itself as the largest truck stop in the world and has 900. Across the country, entire temporary cities form and disperse daily.

"Everybody has different stories," Elaine Peralta said of the truckers that pass through her salon inside the TA Travel Center in Barstow, Calif. "There's a lot of couples that are driving. There's a lot of students driving. Young people are driving, and they do their school work, if they're in college, on the truck. A lot of different ages."

One common complaint among truckers is food quality. Except for the occasional diner, food truck or independent restaurant, fast food is the most readily available fare, with restaurants like Carl's Jr., Wendy's and Taco Bell dominating the truck stop market.

"I would like to see a little more variety and not just fast food," said Angela Eudey, 42, of Bakersfield, Calif., who tries to shun it and stocks up on groceries before she hits the road. "I have a fridge, so I buy food each week," she said. "Mostly fresh fruits, vegetables, yogurt, luncheon meat."

"I try to be healthy," the truck driver said.

Being healthy isn't easy, though. With long hours behind the wheel and a lack of nourishing food options, truckers face a variety of challenges. Various studies have found that truckers have higher-than-usual rates of obesity, diabetes, back problems and depression and that long-haul drivers are more likely to smoke.

Another issue presented by truck stop food is the cost. As of 2021, the mean annual pay for a truck driver was \$50,340 — down significantly from 1980, when the average pay was \$110,000 after adjusting for inflation, according to one analysis. Pay can be especially low for new drivers, or independent contractors, as they can be on the hook for costs like training fees, maintenance and fuel.

"Everything is expensive," said Anthony Johnson, who is 36 and based in Miami. "And I don't get paid that much to keep buying food out in restaurants at all. And Uber Eats is worse. I'm constantly spending \$30 for things that cost \$9."

At a stop in Barstow, Calif., truckers grilled tri-tip, burgers and sausages over a portable grill in the parking lot. “If you’re going to eat at the truck stop three meals a day, it’s going to cost you \$75 to \$100,” Bobby Parkman, 59, a truck driver from Center Rutland, Vt., said. “This is a lot better.”

Truckers aren’t always able to make it into truck stops or rest areas when they’re not working.

The United States has a huge shortage of truck parking spaces. According to the [American Trucking Associations](#), over 98 percent of truck drivers have reported having difficulty finding safe parking. If no spots are available in designated areas, truckers have to improvise, spending their nights sleeping in potentially unsafe or illegal locations, like vacant lots or highway on-ramps.

For truckers, a good night’s sleep is essential. Driving a truck is incredibly dangerous, and tired drivers exacerbate the problem. In 2020, [4,842 large trucks were involved in fatal crashes](#) — and 107,000 in crashes that resulted in injury. According to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, [fatigue is a factor](#) in around 13 percent of truck crashes.

“There’s been many a time I couldn’t find a spot,” said Mr. Galbreath, who has sometimes been forced to sleep on the side of the highway because of the lack of parking. “You have vehicles that are traveling down the highway at 65, 70 miles an hour.”

He continued: “You can feel them when they run by you, rocking the truck. You’re not going to get a good night’s rest doing that.”

Yet while truck drivers have adapted to increasing difficulties on the road, the problems ahead seem more transformational.

If driverless trucks are the future of America’s highways, the industry surrounding truckers is likely to head the way of other once essential, now forgotten support industries, like the businesses that once served gold rush towns, mining towns or Route 66 motorists.

“This is all I really want to do,” said Kevin Ransom, 46, who has been driving for 22 years. “I’ve tried welding. I’ve done carpenter work. I’ve done a variety of manual labor jobs, working in the plants, and I don’t care for it. So I don’t know what else I could do.”

He added that he was hopeful it would be another 20 years before automation would affect his job. “By that time,” he said, “I’ll be retired.”

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| HEADLINE | 06/06 Assassinations in Myanmar: resistance tool |
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| SOURCE | https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/06/world/asia/myanmar-assassinations-coup.html |
| GIST | <p>The gunman entered the small government office in central Myanmar, walked up to the man in charge and shot him four times in the head. “You are the ward administrator!” the gunman shouted, according to a brief video clip that captured part of the shooting.</p> <p>U San Mu, the military-appointed ward administrator of Kyakan village, fell dead at his desk as the assassin and an accomplice fled by motorbike. Hours later, a resistance group known as Nga Pyae Ma claimed responsibility for the killing, posting the video clip on Facebook and Telegram.</p> <p>A spokesman for Nga Pyae Ma said in an interview that the group targeted Mr. San Mu because he had collaborated with the military regime that seized power in Myanmar last year.</p> <p>“Local people were unjustly arrested and tortured by the military because of him,” said the spokesman, who uses the nom de guerre Bo Nga Khu. He added that he took the video and drove the getaway motorbike. “He was warned several times before being killed, but his actions did not stop.”</p> |

Across Myanmar, assassinations have become a regular tool of the resistance. More than 400 local armed groups like the Nga Pyae Ma have formed since the coup; many carry out targeted killings for which they later claim responsibility. The assassinations come as the movement to restore democracy has evolved into deadly warfare between a ruthless, well-supplied military known as the Tatmadaw and a resistance movement that has broad public support but limited weaponry.

The shadow National Unity Government, which was formed by ousted elected officials and some ethnic leaders, says it is waging a revolutionary war against the regime. The conflict has taken a huge toll on the civilian population. Nearly a million people have been displaced, the economy has contracted sharply and the health care system is in crisis, even as the military blocks delivery of humanitarian aid.

U Naing Htoo Aung, the unity government's defense ministry secretary, said that ward administrators are legitimate targets because they engage in "the surveillance and coercion of the public" and are essential to the regime's "dictatorial control of the country."

The unity government's People's Defense Force has more than 60,000 fighters organized into battalions, he said, and a similar number make up local resistance groups such as the Nga Pyae Ma. The organized battalions are mainly engaged in fighting the Tatmadaw in the jungles, while the resistance groups operate in towns and cities, where they carry out guerrilla attacks.

Although Russia's invasion of Ukraine has overshadowed the fighting in Myanmar, clashes between the Tatmadaw and resistance forces take place daily. The National Unity Government says it now controls half the country's territory, although most of that is in the hands of armed ethnic groups that have long battled the military in remote borderlands.

The unity government claims that at least 14,890 regime soldiers have died in the fighting, while it has lost just 1,000 fighters. The regime refuses to discuss casualty figures. But earlier this year, the junta acknowledged that military-appointed ward administrators were being killed at a rate of more than one a day. Nearly as many have been wounded. Many were shot in their homes or offices; one resistance group claimed responsibility for gunning down a ward administrator while he was flying a kite.

"We are witnessing the people's revolution in which everyone takes part, collectively making history," Duwa Lashi La, the unity government's acting president, said last month.

Zachary Abuza, a professor at the National War College in Washington, said the People's Defense Force has done surprisingly well on the battlefield and has upgraded its arsenal by capturing weapons.

As the war in Ukraine continues to drain Moscow's resources, he said, the Tatmadaw will find it harder to get weapons, ammunition and replacement parts from Russia, a major supplier. Unable to contain the rebel forces, the Tatmadaw has mounted continuing attacks on the civilian population, Mr. Abuza said, including torching villages and waging a relentless bombing campaign.

"The reliance on arson, indiscriminate artillery fire and air attacks is indicative of a loss of control on the ground," he said. "The Tatmadaw is experiencing an unprecedented degree of casualties and defections. They are now having to fight and defend supply lines in places that were previously secure."

He added, "I think we are looking at a long stalemate."

Local resistance units are not the only ones carrying out assassinations. In recent weeks, armed groups tied to the regime have stepped up their own campaign of targeted killings. According to the National League for Democracy, which shared power with the military before the coup, at least 18 of its members and supporters have been killed by regime-sponsored groups since late April.

Family members said the victims were taken from their homes and driven away in military and police vehicles. Their bodies were found the next day, dumped by roadsides.

The military began replacing thousands of locally elected ward administrators with regime supporters soon after the coup on Feb. 1, 2021. Many of its appointees were quickly accused of being informers, known as dalan, who handed suspected rebels over to the security forces to be imprisoned and tortured.

One such ward administrator was U Tun Naing Oo, from a district near Mandalay, the second-largest city in Myanmar. He was shot dead in the street in January by a local resistance group calling itself the Zarmani Guerrilla Force. The group claimed responsibility for the assassination on Facebook in slang meant to circumvent censors, saying he was “taken to the dog’s path,” meaning killed, “by four lipsticks,” or bullets.

A neighbor, Ko Than Soe said the targeted official had been the local leader of a pro-Tatmadaw militia and had informed on resistance fighters. “He more than deserves to be dead,” said Mr. Than Soe. “Even though he is dead, I would say he is lucky because his family is still safe.”

No one has been arrested or charged in the killings of ward administrators.

Perhaps the resistance groups’ most prominent target is the deputy governor of the Central Bank, Daw Than Than Swe, who was shot and wounded by a gunman in April at her Yangon home. A local resistance force claimed responsibility.

But such guerrilla warfare tactics, with the risk of mistaken killings, can sometimes backfire, alienating people previously sympathetic to the rebel cause.

In February, attackers from the rebel group Zero Guerrilla Force in central Myanmar shot and killed a retired government employee, saying he was dalan and a militia leader supporting the Tatmadaw.

Friends and family members said the victim, U Myint San, 65, was a literature lover who started a library with his own money and encouraged children to read. He had also donated money to a local resistance group, his son said.

“U Myint San was a good person who did good for the community,” said Ko Si Thu, the leader of a local activist group, suggesting he may have been set up by someone with a grudge. “He was not dalan. He has been active in the revolution since the coup.”

The Zero Guerrilla Force leader, U Thet Naing Aung, said the group acted on information from another local rebel group in assassinating U Myint San. “If he was killed by mistake, we will apologize only after the revolution,” he said. “Now I want to focus on the revolution.”

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| HEADLINE | 06/05 Russian hawks push Putin to do more |
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| SOURCE | https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/jun/5/war-gone-sideways-some-russian-hawks-push-putin-do/ |
| GIST | <p>The two Russian senior colonels caught on tape did not hide their fury as Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine ground into its fourth inconclusive month, but the target of their anger was not the Ukrainians shooting at them but their own military and political superiors, who they said — profanely and repeatedly — were not trying to win the war they started.</p> <p>Although much of the Western world and a small but vocal domestic opposition have condemned the brutality of the Russian campaign, the colonels, in a tape released by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, say President Vladimir Putin and his generals have not been tough enough.</p> <p>Kyiv, the Ukrainian capital targeted unsuccessfully early in the fighting, got off far too easy, they said.</p> <p>“Even if [artillery guns] hit the wrong [expletive] place, let them be [expletive] scared, shoot the [expletive] train stations, shoot the [expletive] railways, for [expletive]’s sake,” one Russian colonel said.</p> |

“An [expletive] rocket should have flown into [Ukraine’s parliament],” the colonel added as the two officers explicitly and bluntly criticized Mr. Putin, Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and commanders on the ground in Ukraine.

The recording offers a window into an underappreciated dynamic in the war, which has killed tens of thousands, sent millions of Ukrainians from cities into the country and settled into a grinding war of attrition in the country’s south and east.

While Mr. Putin is under mounting diplomatic, economic and military pressure to stop the war, he is facing pressure from key voices inside the war to escalate and double down on the battle with Ukraine and NATO.

Although the Kremlin has cracked down harshly on antiwar voices inside Russia, a surprisingly lively debate has broken out on social media among veterans groups and military experts about whether Mr. Putin is serious about winning.

The hawkish criticisms, said Foreign Policy.com national security and intelligence analyst Amy Mackinnon, “are expressing growing agitation with the slow pace of the war, with some calling on [Mr. Putin] to institute national mobilization.”

“The rumblings from staunchly nationalist figures offer a glimpse at the corner into which Putin has painted himself into as he contends with a public hungry for a much-promised victory and a military too exhausted to deliver on,” Ms. Mackinnon wrote late last month.

Russian military bloggers, many now posting on the Russian-owned social media site Telegram, have been unsparing in recent days in their criticism of the Russian performance in the war and deeply skeptical of the official Russian media accounts of how the campaign is going, said a recent blog post by Irina Borogan and Andrei Soldatov, Russian investigative journalists and nonresident senior fellows with the Center for European Policy Analysis.

“In three months of the war, something completely unprecedented has emerged — a space for debate within the Russian army, uncensored, and beyond the control of the Ministry of Defense,” Ms. Borogan and Mr. Soldatov wrote. “That space is mostly manned by trusted, hardened veterans, many with the rank of major or lieutenant colonel, no higher. Don’t be misled — these are not peaceniks in the making. If they criticize the army and the Kremlin, they do so from more radical positions.”

Many of their criticisms echo those of Western analysts and intelligence agencies that have been surprised by the relatively weak showing of Russian forces against an outmanned and outgunned opponent.

Ukrainian defensive forces quickly repelled Russia’s scattershot blitzkrieg of Kyiv and other major cities early in the war, the critics say. Supply lines were extended and vulnerable to enemy fire, Russian troops were poorly led and poorly motivated, and Moscow’s vaunted cyberintelligence and disinformation operations proved surprisingly weak.

Mr. Putin, his hawkish critics say, failed to use the May 9 Victory Day commemoration to rally the nation and reset the war. Owing apparently to fears of popular resistance, the Kremlin also has not called for a larger mobilization of troops to make up for the heavy losses suffered by the original invasion force.

Mr. Putin and his top aides insist in public that the war is going according to plan and point to small territorial gains in Ukraine’s Donbas region in recent weeks.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters Friday that Russian forces were prepared to stay in Ukraine as long as necessary to protect its allies and interests in the eastern Donbas provinces.

A Russian missile strike Sunday on targets just outside Kyiv could be a sign that Mr. Putin and his generals have been hearing the criticism. In an interview on Russian state television, Mr. Putin expressed his growing anger with the rush of Western aid into Ukraine, which has helped Kyiv stave off Russian forces. Mr. Putin hinted that Moscow now considers those aid flows legitimate targets in the war.

“All this fuss around additional deliveries of weapons, in my opinion, has only one goal: to drag out the armed conflict as much as possible,” Mr. Putin told Rossiya state television.

If the U.S. and its allies supply Ukraine with longer-range missiles as promised, then Moscow will “draw appropriate conclusions and use our means of destruction, which we have plenty of, in order to strike at those objects that we haven’t yet struck.”

Mr. Putin can still count on lawmakers, state media commentators and others loyal to the regime who are voicing support for the war and amplifying the Kremlin’s grievances against Ukraine and NATO.

Still, Mr. Putin reportedly fired five generals and one police colonel last week in a clear sign of unhappiness with the performance of Russian forces.

The Russian newspaper Pravda reported that Mr. Putin had fired Maj. Gens. Vasily Kukushkin, Alexander Laas, Andrey Lipilin, Alexander Udovenko and Yuri Instrankin. He also sacked police Col. Emil Musin. The newspaper cited a source close to the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs in confirming the report.

The rise of a skeptical and informed dissent with Russia’s military represents a dangerous variable for Mr. Putin, according to a survey of the fighting by the Washington-based Institute for the Study of War.

“The Kremlin is increasingly facing discontent not from Russians opposed to the war as a whole, but military and nationalist figures angry at Russian losses and frustrated with shifting Kremlin framing of the war,” the think tank wrote May 30 in its daily survey of the fighting.

“Russian officials are increasingly unable to employ the same ideological justifications for the invasion in the face of clear setbacks, and a lack of concrete military gains within Ukraine will continue to foment domestic dissatisfaction with the war.”

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| HEADLINE | 06/05 Gas prices double since Biden took office |
|----------|---|
| SOURCE | https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/jun/5/gas-prices-double-bidens-presidency-began/ |
| GIST | <p>The national average price for a gallon of regular gasoline topped \$4.80 on Sunday, twice as much as the day President Biden took office.</p> <p>It is a staggering milestone that underscores both the everyday pain inflation inflicts on Americans and the difficult months ahead for Democrats seeking votes in November.</p> <p>Based on an average of the leading fuel-monitoring services, the average price per gallon was \$2.40 on Jan. 20, 2021, when Mr. Biden was inaugurated.</p> <p>The AAA automobile owners club and GasBuddy, which tracks gasoline prices, pegged the national average at \$4.84 on Sunday.</p> <p>The average American drives 13,476 miles per year, according to the Department of Transportation. That means owners of the Ford F-Series — the most popular truck in 2021 — on average would spend roughly \$3,060 per year at today’s price point compared to about \$1,540 per year at \$2.40 per gallon. For Honda Civic drivers, that would mean roughly \$1,950 compared to about \$980 in 2020.</p> |

Mr. Biden last week conceded there is little that his administration can do in the interim to provide relief on rising energy costs and other everyday items. He warned Americans that inflation across the economy is — at least for now — here to stay.

“There’s a lot going on right now but the idea we’re going to be able to click a switch, bring down the cost of gasoline, is not likely in the near term,” he said. “We can’t take immediate action that I’m aware of yet to figure out how we’re bringing down the prices of gasoline back to \$3 a gallon.”

The gloomy outlook marked a change in tune for Mr. Biden, who has previously expressed optimism — at least publicly — that administration actions would blunt costs. The president has struggled with messaging on energy prices, pivoting from downplaying the spikes as temporary to blaming price-gouging corporations or Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Republicans consistently point the finger at Mr. Biden’s anti-fossil fuel policies and advocacy for a clean-energy economy.

Major supply shortages from the pandemic persist globally, creating a volatile market that’s been exacerbated by the war in Ukraine that has much of the world turning its back on Russian oil.

Add to already high gasoline prices the annual increases for the summer holiday travel season in the U.S.

Analysts say don’t expect fuel costs to deflate anytime soon.

Mr. Biden has failed to assuage Americans’ concerns. With rising prices and voter dissatisfaction, the White House has recently begun a monthlong public relations blitz on inflation.

A Reuters-Ipsos poll released last week showed that 52% of respondents disapproved of Mr. Biden’s overall job and that his approval rating was 42%. The latter is a 6-percentage-point increase from his record-low approval rating of 36% the week prior.

A recent example of false or misleading statements on energy costs from Mr. Biden was last week. He wrote in a Wall Street Journal op-ed about combating inflation that utility companies told him if his climate plan would be adopted — which it has not been due to a lack of support in Congress — the average family’s annual utility bills would be reduced by \$500.

A Washington Post fact-check awarded that claim four Pinocchios. The number came from a research report that estimated household energy costs — not utility bills — could see a \$500 decrease by 2030 — eight years from now.

On separate occasions months apart, Mr. Biden has aggressively pushed the narrative that gas prices would begin to drop with releases from the strategic petroleum reserve. Energy analysts warned such claims were misleading because it was doubtful the releases would produce even marginal — if any — noticeable differences.

Following separate releases at the end of 2021 and earlier this year, fuel costs continued to tick upward. The administration is currently releasing one million barrels of oil per day through October, which failed to prevent weekly all-time highs.

Energy experts emphasize that presidential administrations often receive both outsized credit and blame for gas prices. Former Presidents George W. Bush, Barack Obama and Donald Trump all received criticism or praise for energy prices that were arguably out of their control.

Even so, the cost of gasoline can be — and often is — an administration’s worst nightmare. Voters are presented with gigantic, flashy signs and billboards advertising the daily price wherever they drive.

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| | <p>With each penny that gas prices tick further into record territory, the threat grows of a voter backlash against the party in power.</p> <p>“Joe Biden’s war on American energy has forced families across the country to empty their wallets to fill their tanks,” Republican National Committee Chair Ronna McDaniel said in a statement. “Unfortunately, Biden is doubling down on his disastrous agenda because he’s not the one paying the price — the American people are.”</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/06 Day 103 of the Russia invasion |
| SOURCE | https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/06/russia-ukraine-war-what-we-know-on-day-103-of-the-invasion |
| GIST | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Russian president Vladimir Putin warned that Moscow will hit new targets if the west supplies Ukraine with long-range missiles. “We will strike at those targets which we have not yet been hitting,” Putin told Rossiya state television, without specifying what those targets were. The comments were made in response to a pledge from the US went through with the delivery of Himars rocket artillery that the White House promised last week. • Britain is to supply long-range rocket artillery to Ukraine, including a handful of tracked M270 multiple launch rocket systems, which can hit targets up to 80km (50 miles) away. UK defence secretary Ben Wallace said the decision to ship the rocket launchers was justified because “as Russia’s tactics change, so must our support to Ukraine”. • Russia struck Ukraine’s capital Kyiv with missiles early on Sunday for the first time in more than a month. A railway depot was hit in the eastern suburb of Dniprovsky. Five cruise missiles fired from the Caspian Sea were launched from Tu-95 bombers, one of which was intercepted, Ukraine’s air force said, in an attack that represented a change of approach on the part of Russian forces. • A Russian cruise missile “flew critically low” over the Pivdennoukrainsk nuclear power plant, in the south of the country, at about 5.30am on Sunday, apparently heading for Kyiv. Ukraine’s nuclear energy company Energoatom said Russian forces “still do not understand that even the smallest fragment of a missile that can hit a working power unit can cause a nuclear catastrophe and radiation leak”. • Ukrainian forces have counterattacked and retaken half of the city of Sievierodonetsk in the east of the country, officials said. “It had been a difficult situation, the Russians controlled 70% of the city, but over the past two days they have been pushed back,” Luhansk regional governor Serhiy Gaidai told Ukrainian television. “The city is now, more or less, divided in half.” The Institute for the Study of War, a US thinktank, also said Ukrainian forces were “successfully slowing down Russian operations” in Donbas and were making “effective local counterattacks in Sievierodonetsk”. • Ukraine president Volodymyr Zelenskiy visited his troops on eastern frontlines in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions as well as the south-eastern region of Zaporizhzhia on Sunday. Zelenskiy said he travelled to Lysychansk – just a few kilometres south from Sievierodonetsk – and Soledar, two cities very close to some of the most intense fighting. • Nato kicked off nearly a two-week US-led naval exercise on the Baltic Sea on Sunday with more than 7,000 sailors, airmen and marines from 16 nations, including Finland and Sweden whom aspire to join the military alliance. “It is important for us, the United States, and the other Nato countries to show solidarity with both Finland and Sweden in this exercise,” US General Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said. • A Russian general, Maj Gen Roman Kutuzov, was killed in eastern Ukraine, a Russian state media journalist said on Sunday, adding to the string of high-ranking military casualties sustained by Moscow. There was no immediate comment from the Russian defence ministry. • Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov’s visit to Serbia has been cancelled after countries around Serbia closed their airspace to his aircraft, according to local media reports. A senior foreign ministry source told the Interfax news agency that Bulgaria, North Macedonia and Montenegro had closed their airspace to the plane that would have carried Moscow’s top |

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| | <p>diplomat to Belgrade on Monday. “Our diplomacy has yet to master teleportation,” the source said.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spain is to supply Ukraine with anti-aircraft missiles and Leopard battle tanks in a step up of its military support, according to government sources cited by newspaper El Pais. Spain will provide essential training to the Ukrainian military in how to use the tanks, according to the reports. • A Ukrainian lawmaker, Yevhen Yakovenko, was detained at the Moldovan border at the request of Interpol, Moldova’s border police said on Sunday. Viorel Tentiu, the head of Interpol in Moldova, said in a statement that Yakovenko was put on the list following accusations from Belarus of bribery and corruption. • Russia’s sanctions against Gazprom Germania and its subsidiaries could cost German taxpayers and gas users an extra €5bn (\$5.4bn) a year to pay for replacement gas, the Welt am Sonntag weekly reported, citing industry representatives. |
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| HEADLINE | 06/05 UK long-range rocket artillery to Ukraine |
| SOURCE | https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/06/uk-to-send-long-range-rocket-artillery-to-ukraine-despite-russian-threats |
| GIST | <p>Britain is to supply long-range rocket artillery to Ukraine, despite a threat on Sunday from Russia’s president, Vladimir Putin, to bomb fresh targets if similar weapons from the US were delivered to Kyiv.</p> <p>The UK will send a handful of tracked M270 multiple launch rocket systems, which can hit targets up to 50 miles away, in the hope they can disrupt the concentrated Russian artillery that has been pounding cities in eastern Ukraine.</p> <p>Ben Wallace, the UK defence secretary, argued the decision to ship the rocket launchers was justified because “as Russia’s tactics change, so must our support to Ukraine”. The move risks further provoking an already irritated Kremlin.</p> <p>Before the British announcement, Putin told Rossiya state television that Russia would retaliate further if the US went through with the delivery of Himars rocket artillery that the White House promised last week.</p> <p>“We will strike at those targets which we have not yet been hitting,” said the Russian leader, who has been closely involved with operational military decisions throughout the three months-plus of the war. He did not specify what those targets were.</p> <p>In the small hours of Sunday morning, Russian cruise missiles struck a railway depot in the eastern Dniprovsy suburb of Kyiv. Ukraine said the strike hit a rail car repair works; Moscow said it had destroyed tanks sent by eastern European countries to Ukraine.</p> <p>It was the first time anywhere in the capital has been hit for over five weeks. One person was hospitalised, and a plume of smoke rose and was visible from high points in the capital.</p> <p>Five cruise missiles were launched from Tu-95 bombers, one of which was intercepted, Ukraine’s air force said, in an attack that represented a change of approach on the part of Russian forces. Kyiv was last hit on 28 April.</p> <p>Russia’s ministry of defence claimed it was targeting an arsenal of T-72 tanks that had been delivered from eastern European countries, suggesting it now wants to target the supply of western arms. But Ukrainian officials said the statement was false.</p> <p>Oleksandr Kamyshin, the chairman of the board of Ukrainian Railways, said: “There are no such tanks at the plant, as well as no military equipment. There are only cars that we repair. These carriages we need for export – these are, in particular, grain carriages.”</p> |

The UK, in conjunction with the US and other western nations, began the war by promising only to supply “defensive weaponry” to help Ukraine repel the Russian invasion. But as Russia has made gains in the east and the south of the country, western countries have gradually sent more lethal arms.

London said it had been cooperating closely with Washington. The British announcement comes a few days after the US said it would send four similar truck-mounted Himars systems. The US and UK systems are intended to be complementary. The ranges of both are far greater than any land weapons Ukraine currently has.

Like the US, the UK has sought assurances from Kyiv that the M270s would not be used to strike targets within Russia. A British defence source said the weapons will be used “to defend Ukraine, in Ukraine”. They added: “We have confidence that the weapons will be used appropriately.”

Britain did not say how many M270s it was sending, although the number is small and will be comparable to the US decision to send four Himars. Ukrainian troops will be trained on how to use the launchers in the UK, the MoD added, and Kyiv’s forces will be supplied with the appropriate rockets “at scale”.

However, Putin said he believed the west’s goal was to prolong the war in Ukraine, which has now gone on for over three months, after the Russian president launched an unprovoked invasion on 24 February.

“All this fuss around additional deliveries of weapons, in my opinion, has only one goal: to drag out the armed conflict as much as possible,” Putin added.

Ukraine’s nuclear energy company, Energoatom, also warned on Sunday that a Russian cruise missile had come dangerously close to the Pivdennooukrainsk nuclear power plant, in the south of the country, at about 5.30am, apparently heading for Kyiv.

It said the missile “flew critically low” over the site and that Russian forces “still do not understand that even the smallest fragment of a missile that can hit a working power unit can cause a nuclear catastrophe and radiation leak”.

Elsewhere, Britain’s Ministry of Defence said that Ukrainian forces had counterattacked in Sievierodonetsk in eastern Ukraine, “likely blunting the operational momentum Russian forces previously gained” but offered no assessment of whether the effort was pushing the invaders back.

On Saturday, Serhiy Haidai, the Ukrainian governor of Luhansk province, said his country’s forces had regained about 20% of the city in Donbas, which had been under days of attack from concentrated Russian shelling and airstrikes.

Haidai repeated that claim on Sunday, adding that eight Russians had been taken prisoner and that the occupiers had “lost a huge number of personnel”. A humanitarian headquarters in neighbouring Lysychansk had been struck with 30 shells overnight, the governor said.

Ukrainian forces were “successfully slowing down Russian operations” in Donbas and were making “effective local counterattacks in Sievierodonetsk”, said the Institute for the Study of War, a US thinktank, overnight.

The research group, which closely monitors the fighting, said that Russia “may still be able to capture Sievierodonetsk and Lysychansk” and that it appeared that “Ukrainian defences remain strong in this pivotal theatre”.

Britain’s Ministry of Defence said Russia was relying on “poorly equipped and trained” separatist forces from Luhansk to conduct the clearance of the city, a tactic it said had been previously employed by Moscow’s forces in Syria. “This approach likely indicates a desire to limit casualties suffered by regular Russian forces,” it added.

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| | <p>One Ukrainian presidential adviser urged European nations to respond with “more sanctions, more weapons” to the strike on Kyiv – and appeared to criticise the French president, Emmanuel Macron, who had said in an interview on Friday that Russia must not be humiliated in Ukraine so that a diplomatic solution could eventually be found.</p> <p>Mykhailo Podolyak, an adviser to the head of the president’s office, tweeted: “While someone asks not to humiliate Russia, the Kremlin resorts to new insidious attacks. Today’s missile strikes at Kyiv have only one goal – kill as many Ukrainians as possible.”</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/05 Bird flu outbreak: inhumane culling’s? |
| SOURCE | https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/jun/06/us-bird-flu-outbreak-millions-of-birds-culled-in-most-inhumane-way-available |
| GIST | <p>The US poultry industry has increasingly switched to “the most inhumane method available” to cull tens of millions of birds during the latest outbreak of avian influenza, according to government data. Outbreaks of the disease, also known as bird flu, have wreaked havoc across Europe and the US this year, with 38 million birds killed in the US so far.</p> <p>But how these birds are killed has generated controversy, with veterinarians and animal welfare campaigners urging an end to the use of the ventilation shutdown method, which kills animals by sealing off the airflow to the poultry sheds and increasing temperatures to lethal levels.</p> <p>Workers have described the method as like “roasting animals alive”. European officials have said it should not be used in the European Union.</p> <p>Advertisement</p> <p>In the US, however, the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) lists ventilation shutdown with supplemental heat as “permitted in constrained circumstances” for “depopulation”.</p> <p>A new analysis has found that it has now become the main method for killing birds, used in nearly three-quarters of culls.</p> <p>The analysis of US Department of Agriculture (USDA) data by the Animal Welfare Institute found 73% of culls in the US in February and March (the most recent period for which data is available) involved the use of ventilation shutdown.</p> <p>This represents a dramatic shift from the last bird flu epidemic, in 2015, which resulted in the killing of 50 million farmed birds in the US. During that outbreak, the animals were predominantly killed by carbon dioxide poisoning or smothered in a blanket of firefighting foam.</p> <p>“The default method of killing seems to have changed from foam to ventilation shutdown,” said Dena Jones, director of the AWI farm animal programme, who said the design of poultry housing “ensures they won’t be able to humanely kill them”.</p> <p>A USDA spokesperson said “some housing designs do not allow for effective depopulation using foam” and that the carbon dioxide method was “hindered by supply shortages”. The department financially compensates farmers for culling animals.</p> <p>Activists have protested against the widespread use of ventilation shutdown, most notably by disrupting basketball games to draw attention to Glen Taylor, the billionaire owner of the Minnesota Timberwolves team who also owns an Iowa egg farm where 5.3 million hens were killed using ventilation shutdown.</p> <p>A coalition of vets and animal rights advocates have urged the AVMA to reclassify the method as “not recommended”. The lack of response so far from the AVMA “harms animals and the veterinary profession’s reputation as caring advocates for animals”, according to Crystal Heath, a vet and co-founder of the ethical veterinary group Our Honor.</p> |

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| | <p>In the EU and the UK, birds are culled with carbon dioxide gas or nitrogen-infused foam, which are considered to be more humane methods than using firefighting foam when carried out correctly because they render the animals unconscious before killing them, Jones said.</p> <p>The European Food Safety Authority says ventilation shutdown should not be used, but there have been reports of producers in France being given emergency permission to use it.</p> <p>The EU also considers the use of firefighting foam to kill birds as inhumane because it entails “drowning in fluids or suffocation by occlusion of the airways”.</p> <p>The USDA did not respond to a question about whether any steps were being taken to require less painful cull methods or prevent ventilation shutdown from becoming the default in future outbreaks.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/05 UK Queen appearance closes 4-day jubilee |
| SOURCE | https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/jun/05/humbled-and-deeply-touched-queen-thanks-nation-as-four-day-jubilee-ends |
| GIST | <p>The Queen crowned her historic platinum jubilee celebrations with a last-minute appearance on the balcony of Buckingham Palace on Sunday, bringing to a close four days of festivities that revealed not only the contents of her handbag, but a nation’s undiminished appetite for a party.</p> <p>The 96-year-old monarch waved to cheering crowds gathered in the Mall for the carnival climax of the four-day bank holiday weekend.</p> <p>She was accompanied only by those closest to the throne, a tableau of the future of Britain’s monarchy, with the Prince of Wales, the Duchess of Cornwall, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and their children; an image incorporating three future kings, and two future queens.</p> <p>This was the people’s day of the jubilee, as thousands of street parties were held across the UK. In London it did not, as threatened, rain on the Queen’s parade, as a carnival extraordinaire featured a two mile-long pageant dedicated to the only monarch most of us have ever known.</p> <p>It was initially uncertain whether the Queen, whose mobility issues had caused her to miss so much of the jubilee, would be fit enough to attend. The first indication came when the royal standard was raised above Buckingham Palace at 4.30pm, meaning she had arrived.</p> <p>Later, in a written message of thanks to the nation, she seemed to acknowledge her fragility, but committed to continue as monarch, saying: “When it comes to how to mark 70 years as your Queen, there is no guidebook to follow. It really is a first. But I have been humbled and deeply touched that so many people have taken to the streets to celebrate my platinum jubilee.</p> <p>“While I may not have attended every event in person, my heart has been with you all; and I remain committed to serving you to the best of my ability, supported by my family.</p> <p>“I have been inspired by the kindness, joy and kinship that has been so evident in recent days, and I hope this renewed sense of togetherness will be felt for many years to come.”</p> <p>Along the route from Whitehall to Buckingham Palace, retracing her coronation procession, more than 6,000 participants – celebrities, costumed performers and colourful characters on extravagant floats – paraded through central London.</p> <p>The procession, telling the story of the Queen’s seven-decade reign, was led by the gold state coach, more than 250 years old and a poignant symbol of the coronation.</p> |

The monarch appeared as a hologram, projected on its windows in archive footage of her as a young sovereign waving to crowds.

The pageant marked the end of a four-day, flag-waving orgy of patriotism; military ceremonials; crowds thronging the Mall; beacons and bunting; Buckingham Palace transformed by light shows and a spectacular drone display.

An average of 11.2 million TV viewers – reaching a peak of 13.4 million – tuned in to watch [Saturday's Platinum Party at the Palace](#) and the unveiling of the biggest secret of all, the Queen demonstrating her capacity to still surprise, and her superb comic timing, in [a small cameo having tea with Paddington Bear](#), and revealing – after seven decades – the marmaladey contents of her famous handbag.

Earlier on Sunday, Charles, who had paid tribute to “Her Majesty – Mummy”, and Camilla joined a Big Jubilee Lunch at The Oval, in south London.

His hope was that the spirit of togetherness, engendered over the weekend, would endure, telling guest Sarah Friar, CEO of neighbourhood app Nextdoor: “When it comes to Monday, [are we going to go back to all the bickering again?](#) Let’s hope we don’t do that.” Gemma Snow, from the Eden Project, who also spoke to Charles, said he talked about “keeping that togetherness going”.

There were royals aplenty in the royal box, but the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, who flew in from California last week with children Archie, three, and Lilibet, one, were not present. Absent from the palace balcony on Thursday, the couple have only been seen in public on one occasion when they appeared with other members of the royal family at Friday’s service of thanksgiving.

The final carnival act of the jubilee took place around the Queen Victoria Memorial outside Buckingham Palace, as the £15m pageant concluded in a finale with Ed Sheeran performing his hit Perfect, followed by a mass rendition of the national anthem.

A roll call of British stars, from TV, film, music and sport from each era of the Queen’s reign had travelled the route in eight open-top buses. They included Idris Elba, Alan Titchmarsh, Sir Cliff Richard, fashion royalty Kate Moss and Naomi Campbell, as well as the puppet Basil Brush.

There were dames in vintage cars, including Joan Collins, Darcey Bussell, Prue Leith, Twiggy and Zandra Rhodes. A peloton of 300 cyclists, on vintage bikes, was led by Sir Chris Hoy, Dame Laura Kenny and husband Sir Jason Kenny. A nod to Britain’s history was provided by parades of classic motorbikes, scooters, Morris Minors and vintage Land Rovers, with dancers performing the Lambeth Walk.

A fleet of Aston Martins represented James Bond. There were hippies, hula-hoopers, energetic space hoppers, Daleks, ice-cream vans, a towering cake with corgi toppers, and giant puppets – all accompanied by a cacophony of musical hits from decades past.

More than 85,000 Big Jubilee lunches were held, according to organisers.

In reality, it was a jubilee without its leading lady for much of the time, as she missed the thanksgiving service, the Epsom Derby and the pop concert. The Queen was on public view in person for just over 27 minutes throughout the weekend.

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| HEADLINE | 06/05 Hindus flee Kashmir amid targeted killings |
| SOURCE | https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/05/fear-is-increasing-hindus-flee-kashmir-amid-spate-of-targeted-killings |
| GIST | Hundreds of minority Hindus have fled from Indian-administered Kashmir, and many more are preparing to leave, after a fresh spate of targeted killings stoked tensions in the disputed Himalayan region. |

Three Hindus have been killed by militants in Kashmir this week alone, including a teacher and migrant workers, prompting mass protests and the largest exodus of Hindu families from the Muslim-majority region in two decades.

Sanjay Tickoo, a Kashmiri Pandit activist, said: "Some 3,500 people have left and more will be leaving in coming days."

Many Hindu families said they were waiting to get discharge certificates for their children from schools and then would leave as soon as possible. "Fear is increasing with each new killing," said Tickoo. "The minorities are facing the worst situation in Kashmir."

On Thursday morning, suspected rebels killed Vijay Kumar, a bank manager from Rajasthan state, in southern Kulgam district. CCTV footage showed a masked man walking into Kumar's office and firing a pistol at him.

Later in the evening, two Hindu migrant workers were shot at in Budgam by two masked gunmen. One among them, identified as Dilkhush from Bihar, died from his injuries on the way to the hospital.

Two days before that, Rajni Bala, a Hindu school teacher, was killed by suspected militants, also in Kulgam. On 12 May, Rahul Bhat, a Hindu man, was killed when assailants barged into his office and fired bullets at him.

At least 19 civilians have been killed this year in similar targeted attacks in the region, including minority Hindus, government employees and a woman who was known for her Instagram videos.

Police have blamed Pakistan-backed militant groups for the killings. Kashmir has been a disputed territory between India and Pakistan since their independence in 1947. While both countries control the region in parts, they both lay claim over it in its entirety, and since the 1980s, Indian-controlled Kashmir has been rocked by a violent militant insurgency loyal to Pakistan.

After the string of attacks, Hindus say they being driven out of the region. These include Kashmiri Hindus, commonly referred to as Pandits, 65,000 of whom first fled from the valley in a mass exodus in the 1990s, when a violent pro-Pakistan insurgency broke out in the region and they began to be targeted.

By 2010, a few thousand Kashmiri Hindus had returned to the Muslim-majority region, enticed by a government rehabilitation policy that provided jobs and guarded accommodation to about 4,000 people. But in recent weeks, those who returned have been protesting against the killings and demanding more security. Hindu employees have been abstaining from their duties, urging the government to relocate them to safer locations.

"We are in a 1990s-like situation," said Pyarai Lal, 65, who lives in Sheikhpora Budgam, in one of the seven guarded housing facilities provided to Hindus. "My son is a teacher and he has not attended his duty for the last two weeks. We are afraid to even leave our home. Who knows when a gunman will attack?"

Lal shifted to southern Jammu city in 1987 with his family and returned in 2010 after the government gave his son a teaching job. But now, he and his family are again preparing to leave. "It seems the situation is going to get worse and we are going to leave soon to Jammu," said Lal.

Authorities have promised the employees they will be posted to safer locations, and police made assurances they were increasing security by intensifying counter-insurgency operations, surveillance and using drones.

But many Kashmiri Pandits have accused authorities of barring them from leaving and allege that police and paramilitary forces have been deployed at the gates of their government provided accommodations to stop them.

“It seems the government is waiting to get us all killed,” said Rinku Bhat, a Kashmiri Pandit. “Or they are trying to show false normalcy by forcibly holding us at a place where every minute is unsafe for us.”

On Wednesday, the Kashmiri Pandit Sangharsh Simiti, an organisation that tracks the minority community in the region, wrote a letter to the region’s chief justice raising concern for their safety and accused the government of playing with their lives by preventing them from relocation, seeking high court intervention.

The targeted attacks against Hindus pose a great political challenge to prime minister Narendra Modi’s Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata party (BJP) government, which has made repeated promises to look after the interests of Kashmiri Pandits. On Friday, India’s home minister, Amit Shah, held a high-level review meeting on the security situation in the region, but no government statement has been made on the issue.

In 2019, Modi unilaterally revoked Kashmir’s autonomy, and enforced a military crackdown under the guise of greater security for Kashmir. The government introduced a slew of laws allowing non-locals to buy property in the region, in the hope of enticing Hindus to settle in the state, a move many locals feared was Delhi’s attempt to bring about demographic changes in the Muslim-majority region.

Many see the removal of Kashmir’s autonomy in 2019, as well as Hindu nationalist policies of the Modi government, which have driven an increase in attacks against Muslims in India, as a driving force behind the growing surge of violence in Kashmir.

“Kashmiri Muslims feel their religion and identity is in the danger and [the attacks] definitely seems in reaction to that,” said Tickoo.

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| HEADLINE | 06/06 SKorea, US launch tit-for-tat missiles to sea |
| SOURCE | https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/06/south-korea-and-us-fire-eight-missiles-into-sea-in-show-of-force-to-north-korea |
| GIST | <p>South Korea and the US have fired eight surface-to-surface missiles into the sea in response to North Korea’s launch of a similar number of ballistic missiles the previous day, a South Korea defence ministry official said.</p> <p>South Korea said Monday’s tit-for-tat launch off its east coast was a demonstration of Seoul’s “capability and readiness to carry out precision strikes” against the source of North Korea’s missile launches or the command and support centres, the Yonhap news agency cited the South Korean military as saying.</p> <p>South Korea’s president, Yoon Suk-yeol, has vowed to take a tougher line against the North and agreed with Joe Biden at a summit in Seoul last month to upgrade joint military drills and their combined deterrence posture, including the deployment of more powerful US weapons.</p> <p>On Monday, Yoon said the North’s nuclear and ballistic missile programmes had reached a level where they “threatened regional and world peace”, and promised a “firm and stern response” to any future provocations.</p> <p>The militaries of South Korea and the US fired eight missiles over a period of about 10 minutes starting at 4.45am, Yonhap said.</p> <p>US Forces Korea said in a statement that the exercise had involved one US army missile and seven South Korean army missiles. It said the countries’ alliance “remains committed to peace and prosperity on the</p> |

Korean peninsula and throughout the Indo-Pacific. The US commitment to the defence of [South Korea] remains ironclad.”

North Korea fired eight short-range ballistic missiles [towards the sea off its east coast on Sunday](#), a day after the US aircraft carrier Ronald Reagan concluded a three-day naval exercise with South Korea in the Philippine Sea, apparently their first joint drill involving a carrier since November 2017.

The South’s military said it had detected the North firing the missiles over a 35-minute period from at least four different locations, in what appeared to be a single-day record for the regime’s ballistic launches.

North Korea, which is several weeks into battling its [first known outbreak of Covid-19](#), has criticised previous joint drills as proof of Washington’s continued “hostile policies” toward Pyongyang, despite its talk of resuming nuclear diplomacy.

Pyongyang has not commented on its recent missile tests and appears to be focusing on its Covid-19 response for the domestic audience, but it is continuing to modernise its military, according to Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul.

While the regime has not yet demonstrated miniaturised nuclear warheads, missiles with multiple warheads, or warhead reentry capability, even launches of short-range missile launches can provide valuable lessons, he said.

“Firing many projectiles at once from various locations suggests Pyongyang is practicing to overwhelm South Korea’s missile defences,” Easley said, adding that the US and South Korea had “quickly responded to the Kim regime’s recent missile firings with counter-launches that demonstrate combined readiness for precision strikes against the origin of an attack”.

North Korea has conducted a flurry of missile launches this year, from hypersonic weapons to intercontinental ballistic missiles [ICBM], for the first time in nearly five years.

Washington and Seoul officials also recently warned that North Korea appeared ready to resume nuclear weapons tests for the first time since 2017, as Kim attempts to push his country’s status as a genuine nuclear power to win economic and security concessions from the US.

Last month, North Korea fired three missiles, including one thought to be its largest ICBM, after Biden ended his three-day trip to South Korea, where he and Yoon agreed to new measures to deter the regime.

The combined forces of South Korea and the US also fired missiles in response to those tests, which the two allies said violated UN security council resolutions.

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| HEADLINE | 06/04 Experts: Covid herd immunity not realistic |
| SOURCE | https://abcnews.go.com/Health/youre-waiting-herd-immunity-covid-19-time-move/story?id=84910302 |
| GIST | <p>Early in the pandemic, scientists and public health experts leaned on their experience with other viruses to make predictions about COVID-19, hopeful that when enough people developed immunity, the virus would be stopped in its tracks.</p> <p>But in the years that followed, and even after the introduction of highly effective vaccines, vaccine scientists and public health experts interviewed by ABC News realized COVID-19 is unlikely to completely disappear.</p> <p>Although herd immunity through widespread vaccination can be a successful strategy for certain viruses, such as those that cause smallpox and polio, scientists no longer consider it an appropriate management strategy for the virus that causes COVID-19, these experts said.</p> |

Herd immunity refers to a situation where a virus can't spread because it keeps encountering people who are resistant to it. As a result, a small number of people who lack resistance can still be protected by the "herd" of resistant people around them, because the virus is less likely to spread to them.

But herd immunity depends on some hidden assumptions. First, that resistant people stay resistant. Second, that resistant (or vaccinated) people cannot transmit the virus. [Scientists learned over the past two years](#) that these assumptions do not hold for COVID-19.

Vaccine scientists and public health experts said herd immunity isn't realistic for COVID-19 because of what we've learned about the virus itself.

Chiefly, immunity wanes relatively quickly, and vaccinated people can still transmit the virus, especially when confronted with rapidly evolving new variants. Meanwhile, human behavior has been hard to predict, with a slower-than-hoped vaccine rollout, and constant changes in social distancing hampering scientists' ability to anticipate and prepare for the future.

Lessons learned about the virus itself

Rarely does a vaccine offer total and complete protection against infection. On the one hand, tetanus shots [can stay durable](#) for over 30 years. But for COVID-19, both infection- and vaccine-induced immunity wanes over time.

"When you get a vaccine, it induces two types of immune response," Dr. Paul Offit, Director of the Vaccine Education Center at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, told ABC News. "One response is to make antibodies, which last three to six months. Antibodies can protect against even mild disease."

Antibodies are proteins that bind to virus particles to inactivate them. They also help prevent people from transmitting the active virus to others since they can bind the virus before it gets to someone new.

Antibody-based immunity against mild disease wanes after three to six months. However, immunity against severe disease remains because of the second immune response.

"The second response is to make memory B and T cells, which are longer-lived," Offit said.

Memory cells tend to lay dormant and need a trigger before they start generating antibodies.

The virus that causes COVID-19 has a short incubation period. Most infected people become contagious within the first few days, long before memory cells activate to make antibodies.

Since memory cells eventually act about two weeks in, infections typically won't progress beyond mild illness. But by then, many folks will have transmitted the virus to others.

"All the vaccines still provide robust protection against severe disease," Dr. Dan Barouch, virologist and immunologist at Harvard Medical school, told ABC News. "None of the vaccines do a very good job at preventing infection."

Lessons learned about human behavior

Fewer than 70% of Americans are fully vaccinated two years after vaccines became available. Worldwide, many countries have [even worse vaccine coverage](#).

Leaving reservoirs of unvaccinated people is like leaving flammable material around a forest fire. With plenty of fuel to feed it, the fire keeps burning. Every new infection is a chance for the virus to grow and mutate. Some mutations could confer vaccine resistance.

"Currently, the vaccine and boosters are free [...] and accessible through mass public vaccination sites," [Azra Behlim](#), PharmD, MBA, Associate Vice President of Pharmacy Sourcing & Program Services at Vizient, a health care services company, told ABC News.

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| Return to Top | <p>Going forward, things may shift toward charging a fee, like for other vaccines.</p> <p>"[Federal] decisions [...] on whether or not to extend provisions on the COVID Relief bill will impact whether this shift will take place now or at a later date," Behlim said.</p> <p>Experts speculate that real herd immunity could happen if everyone received vaccines every three to six months, so antibodies never waned. But the logistics of vaccine rollouts and booster fatigue concerns make that impossible.</p> <p>"The only reasonable goal of this vaccine is to prevent serious illness," Offit said, noting the vastly lower death and hospitalization rates now that more Americans are vaccinated.</p> <p>As experts shift away from herd immunity to the prevention of severe illness, they say social distancing policies will need to be determined at the local level.</p> <p>But social distancing policies use assumptions about human behavior, not just virus behavior, experts said.</p> <p>"We have a snapshot of what happened in time, but as people's behaviors change, those assumptions become less valid and the models tend to erode," Dr. John Brownstein, ABC News contributor and chief innovation officer at Boston Children's Hospital, said.</p> <p>If more virulent and contagious variants appear, epidemiology models will have to change fast.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/06 Muslim nations slam India over insults |
| SOURCE | https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/muslim-nations-slam-india-insulting-remarks-islam-85207845 |
| GIST | <p>NEW DELHI -- India is facing major diplomatic outrage from Muslim-majority countries after top officials in the governing Hindu nationalist party made derogatory references to Islam and the Prophet Muhammad, drawing accusations of blasphemy across some Arab nations that have left New Delhi struggling to contain the damaging fallout.</p> <p>At least five Arab nations have lodged official protests against India, and Pakistan and Afghanistan also reacted strongly Monday to the comments made by two prominent spokespeople from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party. Anger has poured out on social media, and calls for a boycott of Indian goods have surfaced in some Arab nations. At home, it has led to protests against Modi's party in some parts of the country.</p> <p>The controversial remarks follow increasing violence targeting India's Muslim minority carried out by Hindu nationalists who have been emboldened by Modi's regular silence about such attacks since he was first elected in 2014.</p> <p>Over the years, Indian Muslims have often been targeted for everything from their food and clothing style to inter-religious marriages. Rights groups such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have warned that attacks could escalate. They have also accused Modi's governing party of looking the other way and sometimes enabling hate speech against Muslims, who comprise 14% of India's 1.4 billion people but are still numerous enough to be the second-largest Muslim population of any nation.</p> <p>Modi's party denies the accusations, but India's Muslims say attacks against them and their faith have increased sharply.</p> <p>The anger has been growing since last week after the two spokespeople, Nupur Sharma and Naveen Jindal, made speculative remarks that were seen as insulting Islam's Prophet Muhammad and his wife Aisha.</p> |

Modi's party took no action against them until Sunday, when a sudden chorus of diplomatic outrage began with Qatar and Kuwait summoning their Indian ambassadors to protest. The BJP suspended Sharma and expelled Jindal and issued a rare statement saying it "strongly denounces insult of any religious personalities," a move that was welcomed by Qatar and Kuwait.

Later, Saudi Arabia and Iran also lodged complaints with India, and the Jeddha-based Organization of Islamic Cooperation said the remarks came in a "context of intensifying hatred and abuse toward Islam in India and systematic practices against Muslims."

India's Foreign Ministry on Monday rejected the comments by the OIC as "unwarranted" and "narrow-minded." On Sunday, India's embassies in Qatar and Kuwait released a statement saying the views expressed about the Prophet Muhammad and Islam were not those of the Indian government and were made by "fringe elements." The statement said that strong action had already been taken against those who made the derogatory remarks.

The criticism from Muslim countries, however, was severe, indicating that insulting Prophet Muhammad was a red line.

Qatar's Foreign Ministry said it expected a public apology from the Indian government, and Kuwait warned that if the comments go unpunished, India would see "an increase of extremism and hatred." The Grand Mufti of Oman described the "obscene rudeness" of Modi's party toward Islam as a form of "war." Riyadh said the comments were insulting and called for "respect for beliefs and religions." And Egypt's Al-Azhar Mosque, the Sunni world's foremost institution of religious learning, described the remarks as "real terrorism (that) can plunge the entire world into severe crises and deadly wars."

The remarks made by Sharma during a TV program in India and Jindal in a tweet risk damaging India's ties with Arab nations.

India maintains strong relations with Gulf countries, which rely on millions of migrant workers from India and elsewhere in South Asia to serve their tiny local populations and drive the machinery of daily life. India also depends on oil-rich Gulf Arab countries, such as Saudi Arabia, to power its energy-thirsty economy.

The remarks also led to anger in India's archrival and neighbor, Pakistan, and in Afghanistan.

On Monday, Pakistan's Foreign Ministry summoned an Indian diplomat and conveyed Islamabad's "strong condemnation," a day after Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif said the comments were "hurtful" and "India under Modi is trampling religious freedoms & persecuting Muslims." India's Foreign Ministry responded by calling Pakistan "a serial violator of minority rights" and said it should not engage "in alarmist propaganda and attempting to foment communal disharmony in India."

"India accords the highest respect to all religions," ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said.

Criticism also came from Kabul. The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan said the Indian government should not allow "such fanatics to insult ... Islam and provoke the feelings of Muslims."

Modi's party also faced anger from some of its own supporters, but it was for a different reason. Many Hindu nationalists posted comments on social media saying the government was buckling under international pressure.

Anti-Muslim sentiments and attacks have risen across India under Modi. Last week, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said India was seeing "rising attacks on people and places of worship," eliciting a response from New Delhi, which called the comments "ill-informed."

More recently, religious tensions have escalated after some Hindu groups went to a local court in northern Varanasi city to seek permission to pray at a 17th century mosque, claiming that it was built by

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| | demolishing a temple. Critics say these tensions have been further exacerbated by Indian television anchors during raucous debates. |
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| HEADLINE | 06/04 EPA raises ethanol amount blend with gas |
| SOURCE | https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/epa-raises-amount-ethanol-blended-gas-85186379 |
| GIST | <p>DES MOINES, Iowa -- The Biden administration on Friday set new requirements that increase the amount of ethanol that must be blended into the nation's gasoline supply but reduce previous ethanol-blending requirements due to a plunge in fuel demand during the coronavirus pandemic.</p> <p>The Environmental Protection Agency said it would set the 2022 levels for corn-based ethanol blended into gasoline at 15 billion gallons. But even as the new rules increased future ethanol requirements, the EPA retroactively reduced levels for 2020 by 2.5 billion gallons and by 1.2 billion gallons for 2021, reflecting the lower amount of ethanol produced and decreased sales of gasoline during a period when the virus led to a drop in driving.</p> <p>Most gasoline sold in the U.S. contains 10% ethanol, and the fuel has become a key part of the economy in many Midwest states. The fuel consumes more than 40% of the nation's corn supply, and ethanol and other biofuel production plants offer jobs in rural areas that have seen steady population declines over the decades.</p> <p>President Joe Biden is among many politicians from both parties who have frequently promised to support increases in the renewable fuel standard.</p> <p>"Today's actions will help to reduce our reliance on oil and put the RFS program back on track after years of challenges and mismanagement," said EPA Administrator Michael Regan.</p> <p>The Renewable Fuels Association, an ethanol lobbying group, criticized the retroactive reduction of biofuels targets but said the future requirements would bring certainty back to the renewable fuel standard, help lower gas prices and set a foundation for future growth.</p> <p>In the last few days, wholesale ethanol prices have been as much as \$1.30 per gallon lower than gasoline, the group said.</p> <p>The final order also denies exemptions for certain oil refineries from ethanol requirements, saying they had failed to show exemptions were justified under the Clean Air Act.</p> <p>The American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers group, which represents refineries, called the 2022 figure "bewildering and contrary to the administration's claims to be doing everything in their power to provide relief to consumers." The group said unachievable mandates will increase fuel production costs and keep consumer prices high.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/04 Seattle bungles experiment defund police? |
| SOURCE | https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/seattles-botched-experiment-with-defund-the-police-now-could-mean-unwinding-10000-tows/ |
| GIST | <p>Whether you think defund the police has some merit to it, or not, it's becoming clear that no entity in the country has bungled the idea more than the city of Seattle.</p> <p>We couldn't even get the meter reader part of it right.</p> <p>It never made much sense how moving parking enforcement out of the Police Department, and into the roads department, would further social or racial justice. But it was proposed in the hot summer of 2020 anyway, as a way to stick it to the cops by cutting their budget. Along with more meaningful moves, such</p> |

as moving the 911 dispatch center to a new department to try to shift how many calls are answered by officers with guns.

The City Council initially [cut the police budget by about 17%](#), never reaching the 50% goal. But the agency has been in a tailspin ever since.

More than [400 officers have left](#) while [crime has soared](#). This past week The Seattle Times and KUOW reported [new sex assault cases aren't being investigated](#) because of understaffing. Meanwhile, the softer approaches envisioned for community safety still are in the pilot stages.

This past week [the city announced](#) it is [refunding 100,000 parking tickets](#) and voiding another 100,000 because of an oversight — namely that the parking enforcement officers, who are civilians, were not regranted the authority to write tickets after they were switched out of the Police Department last fall.

It's a \$5 million mistake — or it would be if that's hopefully the end of it. But there's another wrinkle, which like most of the defund the police efforts so far, could snowball more in an unintended direction.

It turns out that during the seven-month period when the meter readers lacked the right commission to do their jobs, they also authorized more than 10,000 tows of cars and trucks from city streets.

"We're still crunching our data, but so far we count 10,256 impounds authorized by the Seattle PEOs [parking enforcement officers]," said Chuck Labertew, president of Lincoln Towing, which has the sole contract for city-initiated towing.

Most of these impounds were "peak-hour tows," in which parking officers OK an impound and tow trucks swoop in to clear the road lanes of parked cars at rush hour. If the tickets aren't legit, then there's little doubt some people will also now contest the tows, Labertew says.

"We also auctioned off some of those cars," Labertew said. He estimated about 1,700 of the 10,000-plus cars were sold off.

In a statement Friday, the city said it is not planning on automatically refunding towing and storage fees related to bad tickets, on the grounds that it doesn't necessarily require a ticket to get towed.

"This decision does not affect the rights a person has to request a hearing to challenge a tow as provided by City law," the statement added.

Labertew, of the tow company, was skeptical.

"What's going to happen here is that we're going to get sued, I can guarantee it," he said. "And I'm going to forward every one of those lawsuits on over to the city."

Well this is one way path toward defunding — via lots of bureaucratic make-work.

One Seattle City Council member, Alex Pedersen, [summed up](#) about the ticket fiasco: "This reinforces that rearranging our public safety systems is complicated, and can result in unintended consequences unless implemented with the utmost care."

Yes, and it isn't clear, yet, who in administration failed here. But all nine members of the council did vote for this back in the activism-fueled atmosphere of 2020. At that time there hadn't been an in-depth study of the move, nor was anyone really asking for it. The Black Lives Matter protesters weren't clamoring about parking meter readers; they were focused on the work of actual cops.

There's been some talk of expanding the parking enforcers' duties to include some things cops do now, like directing traffic or responding to car prowls. But if they're going to be doing some crime work in the future, why shift them to the roads department in the first place?

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| | <p>The real reason for all this was performative — it was to appear to be slashing the police budget, without actually cutting any city services or saving any money.</p> <p>No matter what happens with the tows, or how much the bad tickets end up costing the city, those pushing for the true concept of defunding the police ought to be the most infuriated by this botched theater. Because transferring parking enforcement was supposed to be the easy part.</p> <p>The hard part — softening some of the city’s public safety response — is a worthy goal. It’s incredibly complex and delicate work, though. It means setting up a system that can assess, accurately, safely and often instantly, whether to dispatch to volatile street scenes some social help, or uniformed officers with guns.</p> <p>What’s happened with the meter readers sure doesn’t lend much confidence to the effort.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/04 Questions arise senior Iran officer death |
| SOURCE | https://dnyuz.com/2022/06/04/senior-iranian-officer-dies-leaving-questions-about-his-death/ |
| GIST | <p>The death of a senior Iranian military officer at his home in a Tehran suburb a week ago has fueled conflicting reports that he fell from a balcony, committed suicide or was killed.</p> <p>The officer, Col. Ali Esmaelzadeh, died about a week after another high-ranking officer in the same unit, Col. Sayad Khodayee, was killed in a drive-by shooting in Tehran.</p> <p>Their deaths come amid a new wave of heightened tensions between Iran and Israel, which for years have conducted a clandestine war of sabotage and targeted killings.</p> <p>Both officers were high-ranking members of an elite secret detachment of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Force, Unit 840, which Israeli officials say is tasked with killing foreigners abroad.</p> <p>Iran blamed Israel for the killing of Colonel Khodayee, the deputy commander of the unit, and Israel told American officials that it was behind the killing, according to an intelligence official briefed on the communications.</p> <p>But two senior Israeli defense officials said Friday that Israel did not kill Colonel Esmaelzadeh. The officials spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak on the record.</p> <p>The death of Colonel Esmaelzadeh was first reported Thursday by the Saudi-financed, London-based Persian television channel Iran International. The report, citing anonymous sources in Iran, said that Revolutionary Guards officials suspected Colonel Esmaelzadeh of spying for Israel and staged his suicide.</p> <p>The New York Times could not verify that claim, and Iranian and Israeli officials declined to comment. One official Iranian news outlet said that report was false.</p> <p>But Iranian news media have offered conflicting reports on Colonel Esmaelzadeh’s death.</p> <p>Sabreen News, an outlet affiliated with the Quds Forces, reported Thursday that Colonel Esmaelzadeh died after falling off the balcony of his home in Karaj, Iran, under “suspicious circumstances.” The report said that investigations were underway.</p> <p>Iran’s official news agency, IRNA, said that Colonel Esmaelzadeh had died after “an accident” at his apartment, and denied that he had been killed.</p> |

A news platform on the Telegram app affiliated with the Guards, Ammariyon, initially reported that the colonel had been assassinated, then deleted the report and said he had committed suicide by jumping off the balcony.

The Tasnim news agency, also affiliated with the Guards, reported Friday that Colonel Esmaelzadeh had fallen off the balcony because it did not have appropriate guard rails, and that the coroner's office had confirmed the cause of death.

There were other unusual circumstances surrounding his death that raised red flags for some Iranians.

Colonel Esmaelzadeh was a high-ranking officer in an elite unit, but Iranian news media did not report the death for over a week, until the London-based Iran International did.

The Revolutionary Guards have not issued a statement or offered public condolences to the family, standard procedure for a fallen officer.

The funeral was held under a media blackout in a remote village in his native province of Hamedan, according to fliers for the event posted on social media — not, as would be customary, at Tehran's main cemetery with news coverage and officials in attendance.

For three days after Colonel Esmaelzadeh's death, security guards swarmed his neighborhood in Karaj, according to an Iranian reporter who was there and asked not to be identified.

The confusion has led some Iranians, including conservatives, to question the competing narratives.

"Who had the power to carry out the killing of Colonel Esmaelzadeh and why?" tweeted Attaollah Hussein, a conservative veteran of the armed forces.

"It is impossible for IRGC members, who are on the path of martyrdom all their lives, to commit suicide," tweeted Abbas Qaidari, a researcher on Iran defense policy in Toronto. He added that if the Guards were suspicious of someone, they would arrest and interrogate him. "The clues are elsewhere," he said.

The deaths of the two officers of Unit 840 were not the only murky deaths in Iran in the past two weeks. On May 25, a drone attack damaged a military site outside Tehran where Iran develops missile, nuclear and drone technology, and killed a Defense Ministry engineer.

There was no claim of responsibility for the attack, but it fit a pattern of previous Israeli strikes.

Iranian officials have pledged to take revenge on Israel for the killing of Colonel Khodayee last month, prompting Israel to warn its citizens from traveling to countries in the region where Iran may have operatives.

Prime Minister Naftali Bennett of Israel said in a speech on Sunday that Iran had carried out terrorism through proxies against Israel for years but that "the era of immunity for the Iranian regime is over."

Iran's deputy foreign minister, Ali Bagheri Kani, shot back on Friday, telling a reporter in Norway, "The Zionists may only be able to dream of striking Iran — and if that happens, it will be a dream from which they will never wake up."

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| HEADLINE | 06/05 Putin warns US, West: will strike harder |
| SOURCE | https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/putin-warns-west-russia-will-strike-harder-if-longer-range-missiles-supplied-2022-06-05/ |

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| GIST | <p>LONDON, June 5 (Reuters) - President Vladimir Putin warned the West that Russia would strike new targets if the United States started supplying Ukraine with longer-range missiles, the TASS news agency reported on Sunday.</p> <p>If such missiles are supplied, "we will strike at those targets which we have not yet been hitting," Putin was quoted as saying in an excerpt of an interview with Rossiya-1 state television channel.</p> <p>Putin did not name the targets Russia planned to pursue if Western countries began supplying Ukraine with longer-range missiles. He said the "fuss" around Western weapon supplies to Ukraine was designed to drag out the conflict.</p> <p>Ukraine has been seeking Multiple Rocket Launch Systems (MLRS) such as the M270 and M142 HIMARS to strike troops and weapons stockpiles at the Russian forces' rear.</p> <p>U.S. President Joe Biden announced plans this week to give Ukraine precision HIMARS rocket systems after receiving assurances from Kyiv that it would not use them to hit targets inside Russia.</p> <p>Although Russian officials have warned that the U.S. decision to supply Ukraine with advanced rocket systems could exacerbate the conflict, Putin said it would not bring on any fundamental changes on the battlefield.</p> <p>"We understand that this supply (of advance rocket systems) from the United States and some other countries is meant to make up for the losses of this military equipment," Putin said.</p> <p>"This is nothing new. It doesn't change anything in essence."</p> <p>In an excerpt of the same interview aired on Saturday, Putin boasted that Russian anti-aircraft forces have shot down dozens of Ukrainian weapons and are "cracking them like nuts."</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/05 Russia: West tanks destroyed Kyiv strike |
| SOURCE | https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-kyiv-government-and-politics-e98d1d788e132c2a1f2c8ead7ae58761 |
| GIST | <p>KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia's defense ministry said a barrage of airstrikes on Ukraine's capital destroyed tanks donated by the West and other armor in an attack on Sunday that shattered five weeks of eerie calm in Kyiv, as President Vladimir Putin warned the West about supplying long-range rocket systems to Ukraine.</p> <p>Putin said that Moscow would hit targets "we haven't yet struck" if it went ahead with such deliveries. It wasn't immediately clear if Putin was referring to new targets within or outside Ukraine's borders.</p> <p>Russian forces pounded railway facilities and other infrastructure early Sunday in the capital, Kyiv. Ukraine's nuclear plant operator, Energoatom, said one cruise missile buzzed the Pivdennoukrainsk nuclear plant, about 350 kilometers (220 miles) to the south, on its way to the capital — citing the dangers of such a near miss.</p> <p>There was no immediate confirmation from Ukraine that the Russian airstrikes had destroyed tanks.</p> <p>Kyiv hadn't faced any such strikes since the April 28 visit of U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres. The early morning attack triggered air raid alarms and showed that Russia still had the capability and willingness to hit at Ukraine's heart since abandoning its wider offensive across the country to instead focus its efforts in the east.</p> <p>The strikes appeared aimed at thwarting the resupplying of Ukrainian fighters, a rising concern in Moscow.</p> |

In a posting on the Telegram app, the Russian Defense Ministry said high-precision, long-range air-launched missiles were used. It said the strikes destroyed on the outskirts of Kyiv destroyed T-72 tanks supplied by Eastern European countries and other armored vehicles located in buildings of a car-repair business.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24 has led to untold tens of thousands of civilian and troop deaths, driven millions from their homes, sparked vast sanctions against Putin's government and allies, and strangled exports of critical wheat and other grains from Ukraine through Black Sea ports — limiting access to bread and other products in Africa, the Middle East and beyond.

In a television interview on Sunday, Putin lashed out at Western deliveries of weapons to Ukraine, saying they aim to prolong the conflict.

“All this fuss around additional deliveries of weapons, in my opinion, has only one goal: To drag out the armed conflict as much as possible,” Putin said, alluding to U.S. plans to supply multiple launch rocket systems to Kyiv. He insisted such supplies were unlikely to change much for the Ukrainian government, which he said was merely making up for losses of rockets of similar range that they already had.

If Kyiv gets longer-range rockets, he added, Moscow will “draw appropriate conclusions and use our means of destruction, which we have plenty of, in order to strike at those objects that we have not yet struck.”

The missiles hit Kyiv's Darnytski and Dniprovski districts, Mayor Vitali Klitschko said on the Telegram messaging app, punctuating the Kremlin's recently reduced goal of seizing the entire Donbas region in the east. Moscow-backed separatists have fought Ukrainian forces for eight years in the Donbas and established self-proclaimed republics.

In recent days, Russian forces have focused on capturing the city of Sievierodonetsk.

A billowing pillar of smoke filled the air with an acrid odor in Kyiv's eastern Darnytski district, and the charred, blackened wreckage of a warehouse-type structure was smoldering. Police near the site told an Associated Press reporter that military authorities had banned the taking of images. Soldiers also blocked off a road in a nearby area leading toward a large railway yard.

The sites struck included facilities for the state rail company, Ukrzaliznytsia, said Serhiy Leshchenko, an adviser in President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's office, on Telegram.

Energoatom said a Russian cruise missile came dangerously close to the Pivdenoukraiynsk nuclear power plant at 5:30 a.m., seemingly tearing toward Kyiv. It said the missile “flew critically low” and that Russian targeters “still do not understand that even the smallest fragment of a missile that can hit a working power unit can cause a nuclear catastrophe and radiation leak.”

Russian strikes have repeatedly targeted railway facilities, seemingly aimed at slowing the provision of weapons to Ukrainian forces on the front lines. The cruise missiles appeared to have been launched from a Tu-95 bomber flying over the Caspian Sea, the Air Force Command said on Facebook. It said air defense units shot down one missile.

Elsewhere, Russian forces continued their push to take ground in eastern Ukraine, with missile and airstrikes carried out on cities and villages of the Luhansk region, with the war now past the 100-day mark.

Luhansk governor Serhiy Haidai said on Telegram that “airstrikes by Russian Ka-52 helicopters were carried out in the areas of Girske and Myrna Dolyna, by Su-25 aircraft - on Ustynivka,” while Lysychansk was hit by a missile from the Tochka-U complex.

A total of 13 houses were damaged in Girske, and five in Lysychansk. Another airstrike was reported in the eastern city of Kramatorsk by its mayor Oleksandr Goncharenko. No one was killed in the attack, he said, but two of the city's enterprises sustained "significant damage."

On Sunday morning, Ukraine's General Staff accused Russian forces of using phosphorus munitions in the village of Cherkaski Tyshky in the Kharkiv region. The claim couldn't be independently verified.

The update also confirmed strikes on Kyiv, which occurred in the early hours of Sunday. It wasn't immediately clear from the statement which infrastructure facilities in Kyiv were hit.

The General Staff said Russian forces continue assault operations in Sievierodonetsk, one of two key cities left to be captured in the Luhansk region of the Donbas. The Russians control the eastern part of the city, the update said, and are focusing on trying to encircle Ukrainian forces in the area and "blocking off main logistical routes."

The U.K. military said in its daily intelligence update that Ukrainian counterattacks in Sieverodonetsk were "likely blunting the operational momentum Russian forces previously gained through concentrating combat units and firepower." Russian forces previously had been making a string of advances in the city, but Ukrainian fighters have pushed back in recent days.

The statement also said Russia's military was partly relying on reserve forces of the Luhansk region.

"These troops are poorly equipped and trained, and lack heavy equipment in comparison to regular Russian units," the intelligence update said, adding that "this approach likely indicates a desire to limit casualties suffered by regular Russian forces."

Far from the battlefield, Ukraine's national soccer players are hoping to secure a World Cup spot when the team takes on Wales later Sunday in Cardiff.

On the diplomatic front, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov was heading to Serbia for talks with President Aleksandar Vucic early this week, followed by a visit to Turkey on Tuesday, where the Russian envoy is expected to discuss Ukraine with his Turkish counterpart.

Turkey has been trying to work with U.N. and the warring countries to help clear the way for Ukrainian grain to be exported to Turkish ports, though no deal on the issue appeared imminent.

A Ukrainian presidential adviser urged European nations to respond with "more sanctions, more weapons" to Sunday's missile attacks.

Mykhailo Podolyak referenced remarks Friday by French President Emmanuel Macron, who said Putin had made a "historic error" by invading Ukraine, but that world powers shouldn't "humiliate Russia" so that a diplomatic exit could be found when the fighting stops.

"While someone asks not to humiliate, the Kremlin resorts to new insidious attacks," Podolyak tweeted. "Each of such terrorist attacks must face a tough response from European capitals: more sanctions, more weapons."

Ukrainian officials have denounced the remark, and have criticized France and some other European countries for continuing to speak to Putin and talking about diplomatic solutions instead of working to push Russia out of Ukraine militarily.

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| HEADLINE | 06/03 Ukraine's volunteer 'Kraken' unit |
| SOURCE | https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/06/03/ukraine-kraken-volunteer-military-unit/ |

RUSKA LOZOVA, Ukraine — The closest Andrii “Belyi” Maleev ever came to having a weapon in his hands was the hammer he used as a construction worker.

Then the Russians came.

A patrol of about 30 soldiers entered Maleev’s village on foot about 6 a.m. March 14, recalled Maleev, 45. Several stood outside his gate, pointing rifles at him, while two others searched his house and demanded to know whether he had any weapons.

When the soldiers left, so did Maleev — to get military training. Eventually, he returned to the village, this time as a rifle-toting member of the Kraken Regiment, a unit that is quickly becoming one of Ukraine’s better-known volunteer forces.

The Kraken unit was formed by Azov Battalion veterans on the day Russian President Vladimir Putin launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February, a military spokesman said. That makes the Krakens something like a kid brother to the older Azov unit, whose fighters achieved world renown status last month for their epic last stand inside Azovstal, a sprawling steel complex in the port city of Mariupol.

Like the Azov fighters, whose name comes from the Sea of Azov, the regiment’s name and insignia evoke a different maritime theme: the kraken, a mythical sea monster resembling a giant squid.

Their commander is Konstantin V. Nemichev, a political and military figure in Kharkiv. The son of a schoolteacher and an electrician, Nemichev, 26, launched a political career in the right-wing National Corps party before he graduated from college, including an unsuccessful bid last year to become Kharkiv’s mayor. He drew heavily on the support of rowdy young soccer fans, many of whom now serve in his unit.

Now that the Azov Battalion has been decimated, the Krakens stand to become Ukraine’s most famous band of volunteers — and arguably most controversial, like their Azov brethren. Critics said both have drawn fighters from ultranationalist and far-right groups, an allegation their soldiers reject as Russian propaganda. Although the commanders have acknowledged that far-right soldiers might be among their ranks, they said they are outnumbered by a more diverse group dedicated to defending Ukraine.

The Kraken unit operates somewhat in a gray zone — a force that answers to the Defense Ministry but is not part of Ukraine’s armed forces. Soldiers in Ruska Lozova say the unit has about 1,800 soldiers. The military spokesman declined to say how many serve in the unit.

The Kraken unit — which in recent weeks has helped take back villages north of Kharkiv — filled its ranks with “gym rats,” bouncers and “ultras,” the professional soccer fans who sometimes showed their love for Kharkiv’s Metalist team with riotous behavior. Many also hung out at the same sports bar, a place called the Wall, that was bombed, allegedly by Russian separatists, in 2014. Eleven patrons were injured.

But their unit also draws veterans from the regular army, battle-tested paramilitary fighters from Donbas and other volunteers who range in age from 25 to 60.

William — who would only give his first name because of concerns for his family’s safety — hitchhiked approximately 325 miles from Kyiv to join friends in the unit near the Kharkiv front. Now he walks with a limp from a Russian-made Claymore mine that peppered his right leg with shrapnel. Like others, he went to war after receiving combat training where first aid instruction was more plentiful than ammunition.

And there’s still more than a little DIY in the unit’s warcraft, despite nearly three months of sometimes heavy fighting. Their battle wagons are SUVs, pickup trucks, ATVs and — on this day — a Nissan Murano painted bumper to bumper in green, right down to the hubcaps. The camouflage on Anton’s AK-74 is homemade, too. Worried the factory-issue black finish might stick out in Ukraine’s forests, he painted his weapon in multi-tone greens that look more Grateful Dead tie dye than military camo.

“It was chaotic for the first week and a half,” said Anton, 27, who also only gave his first name for security reasons. He recalled how one soldier, feeling confident that he could instruct his comrades on how to fire a Czech antitank weapon, blew up a wall and injured several people instead.

Even now, on a quick tour of the village, the small Kraken squad is less than disciplined about basic firearm safety, such as pointing the weapon’s muzzle only at the sky or at the ground. While taking cover below a tree from a Russian drone overhead, one soldier leaned the muzzle of AK-74 against his crotch. Inside a blown-out hospital, another soldier knelt over an unexploded tank shell, pretending he was about to poke it with his finger.

Yet Kraken members also have learned to fight by fighting, and their morale is high.

“I fought in Donbas and — how to put it? — things are better organized here,” said Oleg Sapalenko, 27, a member of the 25th Airborne Brigade who secured a transfer to the Kraken unit so he could fight for his hometown among friends. “Teammates are way better team players, and that helps a lot.”

All Ukraine needs, Anton said, is for the world to supply the weaponry to push Russian forces back across the border, and soldiers like him will supply the spirit.

“We’re fighting an empire, not some villages in our country,” Anton said.

The Krakens have also been accused of mistreating Russian POWs, a potential war crime. Last month, Moscow put Nemichev on a wanted list, alleging that he was responsible for “an attempt on the life” of eight Russian soldiers, according to a report in Tass, the Russian news agency. A BBC investigation into a video showing several Russian POWs being deliberately shot in the legs found that the Kraken forces had been operating in the area at the time. Nemichev denied the allegations in the BBC account. He didn’t respond to calls and texts seeking comment for this report, but his unit’s press secretary provided a Telegram post from late March in which Nemichev dismissed the video as “fake news” and said his unit was “always very humane” with POWs.

By the time the Kraken unit liberated this suburban village of about 5,000 people at the end of April, many had fled. Maleev estimated Tuesday that only 200 or so remained in what amounted to a newly liberated ghost town. Few here even stepped outside as Ukrainian and Russian forces continued to trade mortar fire.

Much of the village has also been damaged or destroyed, including the Church of St. Nicholas, the village council building and a small hospital. Elsewhere, a tidy row of beehives stood in a field near houses whose heavy wooden roof beams had been snapped and charred. A massive crater lay not far from the gutted, ash-filled house where Maleev’s brother lived.

As in so many other places, Russian occupiers drank heavily and looted local homes and businesses, villagers said. Maleev’s mother, Claudia, 81, described how Russians even fed the local citizens meat they had stolen from a local processing plant when the conversation was interrupted by the sound of a Russian drone overhead.

“It’s buzzing,” Maleev said, hushing everyone. Russians often use drones to identify targets to attack. The sound is faint, like a gas-powered model airplane, but it was enough to cause members of the unit to break up the conversation and seek cover.

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| HEADLINE | 06/05 How asylum seekers cross the border |
| SOURCE | https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/05/us/politics/border-migrants-asylum.html |
| GIST | HIDALGO, Texas — Since President Biden took office, migration at the southern border of the United States has increased to levels not seen in decades. Crossings in the past two months have eclipsed the high numbers of last summer, and officials expect the trend to continue, even though, with pandemic restrictions still in place, there is almost no access to asylum. |

The vast majority of migrants cross into the United States at spots between official ports of entry, walking over the border or wading, swimming or floating across the Rio Grande, almost always under the watch of cartel-approved guides hired in Mexico. At times, some have been invited by Customs and Border Protection officials to walk across pedestrian bridges from Mexico — by far the safest and most orderly route.

Waiting to be Handpicked

A migrant camp known as [Senda De Vida](#) in the Mexican city of Reynosa, across the river from McAllen, Texas, has been full for months. The pastor who runs it opened a second space last month for migrants who were sleeping in a makeshift encampment in a nearby public park.

In early May, a mother and daughter from Honduras were at the camp when they learned that they were among a group chosen to cross into the United States. A year earlier, they said, they fled Honduras after the daughter, 15, had been kidnapped and raped by a local gang. Once a bubbly, chatty teenager, she barely speaks now and flinches whenever anyone comes near, her mother said.

When the pair arrived in Nuevo Laredo, a northern Mexican city where drug cartels have been fighting for turf, they and other people who had been on their bus were kidnapped and sexually assaulted for days, they said. On the 15th day, the mother and daughter escaped and crossed the Rio Grande into the United States on a boat that held about 30 people. But border officials, pointing to Title 42, the public health rule that has restricted immigration since the beginning of the pandemic, sent them back to Mexico.

Soon, they registered with the shelter in Reynosa, which keeps a database of all the migrants who come through it.

In late April, the pastor who runs the shelter, Hector Silva, was asked to meet with U.S. government officials to discuss a process for sending some migrants who qualify for humanitarian exceptions to the public health rule across the pedestrian bridge linking Reynosa with the United States. The government allows such exceptions for migrants deemed particularly vulnerable, with decisions being made on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Silva said Customs and Border Protection had been reaching out two or three times a day to ask for small groups of people who fall into certain categories. On May 1, for instance, Mr. Silva was asked to look for single mothers.

This also happens at other locations along the border, often the result of direct communication between local C.B.P. officials, lawyers and nonprofit groups that assist asylum seekers, according to asylum lawyers and officials with the Department of Homeland Security. In other situations, asylum lawyers work directly with C.B.P. officials to identify migrants who meet humanitarian exceptions.

The mother and daughter from Senda De Vida, along with other migrants deemed eligible to cross that day, were tested for the coronavirus, then directed to a school bus, which would take them to the pedestrian bridge. On the bridge, the daughter, wearing a face mask and a T-shirt that read “Good Vibes Only,” flashed smiling eyes as she stared into the United States.

“My heart is pounding,” the mother said as she waited for officers from Customs and Border Protection to arrive at the spot on the bridge where two types of pavement touch, separating Mexico and the United States. The mother and daughter met up with relatives in Austin later that day.

Trying to Dodge Border Patrol

Early on a recent morning, five migrants sat in a parking lot in Hidalgo, most of them handcuffed to another migrant by one wrist. They gave border agents whatever form of identification they were carrying and put their belongings — including shoelaces, belts, watches and smartphones — into plastic bags. Three were from Mexico, two from Honduras. Two of the Mexicans were married, coming to the United States for a better life; they had left four children under 12 with family back home.

For all but one of them, it was not their first time getting caught after crossing the border. Some had relatives in Texas and Minnesota.

Nearby, Agent Jesse Moreno searched for a group of migrants who were trying to evade the Border Patrol, and he apprehended several men at a self-storage business in Hidalgo, Texas. The men had just crossed the river; their jeans were soaked up to the knees.

Another agent yelled, “Kneel! Kneel!” after finding other migrants from the group hiding under a truck in the parking lot of an adjacent strip mall. One man said it was his fourth time crossing the border.

Border Patrol said the men would be processed at a local station, where agents would record their personal information and run background checks on them, and then they would most likely be sent back to Mexico through the Hidalgo port of entry.

There are also many migrants who manage to sneak across the border and evade detection. Border Patrol agents refer to them as “got-aways.” The Biden administration has estimated that some 389,000 undocumented migrants avoided apprehension between October 2020 and September 2021. Republicans critical of Mr. Biden’s immigration policies say that is most likely a significant undercount.

Surrendering

Many people who have been crossing the southern border in recent years promptly turn themselves in. Agents call them “give-ups”; many constitute families.

One of the busiest crossing points in the Rio Grande Valley is in Roma, Texas, a [historic town](#) of about 11,000, with parts that sit atop sandstone bluffs overlooking the Rio Grande. Before dark one evening last month, a group of Border Patrol agents took in the breathtaking view, including a section of the river where groups of migrants often swim across to the United States in the early hours of the morning.

Later that week, a group of migrants emerged from the river on the Texas side and onto private property, following a winding, sandy path toward the Texas National Guard troops and Border Patrol agents who wait for such arrivals.

Wet from the river, the migrants presented carefully stashed documents to Border Patrol agents, who had set up a makeshift office with a desk and chairs on the unpaved road that connects the river with the town.

Dozens lined up to wait for their turn to speak to an agent. No one tried to sneak away; everyone remained quiet.

A young girl had to go to the bathroom, and her mother escorted her to an inconspicuous spot behind a Border Patrol truck while the girl’s father watched anxiously for them to return.

A Honduran mother fed her baby boy a bottle and smiled and stroked his hair.

A young boy from Guatemala shook his head, trying to get something out of his ear.

Parents made faces at their children to elicit smiles, as the wait stretched into the early hours of the morning.

Typically, federal border officials separate the migrants into categories to help speed up the hours of processing ahead. Children who arrive without a parent or guardian go to one area; others are grouped by nationality. Adult migrants from Mexico and Central America can be swiftly expelled under the pandemic public health rule.

Some migrants — from Cuba and Nicaragua, for example — are usually processed into the country to await removal proceedings that most likely will not take place for months or years.

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| | Once the agents have processed everyone, the migrants are bused to a Customs and Border Protection facility where they wait in more lines and answer more questions. Some may stay there for several days before officials decide whether or not they can remain, at least for now, in the country. |
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| HEADLINE | 06/04 Russia increases air power over Donbas |
| SOURCE | https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/04/world/europe/ukraine-sievierodonetsk-russian-army.html |
| GIST | <p>Russia has increased its use of air power in support of artillery and ground troops who are fighting to expand their territory in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine, including in the city of Sievierodonetsk, a British intelligence report said on Saturday.</p> <p>Ukrainian forces moved heavy guns and howitzers toward the front line in Sievierodonetsk on Friday, pouring men and armor into the fight in an apparent refusal to pull back from a city that Russia has pounded with missile fire for weeks. A Russian defense ministry statement on Saturday said that Ukrainian forces were retreating from the city, a position that Ukrainian officials have denied. The regional Ukrainian military administrator had said overnight that Ukrainian troops had managed to push back Russian forces by 20 percent.</p> <p>President Vladimir V. Putin's forces have made the heavily industrial Donbas region, which borders Russia, the focus of his military campaign after Russian forces failed to seize the capital Kyiv, early in the conflict.</p> <p>That came in part because of Moscow's inability to destroy Ukraine's air defense systems.</p> <p>In the war's second phase, however, Russia has deployed air power to support guided and unguided missile strikes in what the British intelligence report on Sunday called its "creeping advance."</p> <p>"The combined use of air and artillery strikes has been a key factor in Russia's recent tactical successes in the region," the report said. It noted that the increased use of unguided munitions has "almost certainly" caused civilian casualties.</p> <p>Sievierodonetsk is in the Luhansk region of the Donbas. The head of the Ukrainian military administration there, Serhiy Haidai, said Saturday that a mother and child were killed in the past day's fighting, the latest casualties in a battle from which the vast majority of the city's population has fled. Mr. Haidai did not offer details on how they were killed.</p> <p>Though the Donbas, where it has held territory since 2014, is Russia's strategic priority, the front line stretches hundreds of miles from the Russian border north of the country's second largest city, Kharkiv, to the city of Mykolaiv on the Black Sea. That distance and the expanse of the fighting is putting pressure on Ukraine's government, whose forces risk being stretched thin.</p> <p>Russian forces poured "intense fire" on Ukrainian positions in villages north of the city of Kharkiv, the Ukrainian defense ministry said on Saturday.</p> <p>Further south, in Donetsk Province — which together with Luhansk makes up the Donbas — Russian forces shelled three villages near the city of Sloviansk and attempted an assault on another, the defense ministry said.</p> <p>And a cruise missile, fired from a plane by Russian forces, hit the Odesa region on the Black Sea coast early Saturday morning, Odesa city officials said on Telegram. The missile struck a mostly agricultural area with warehouses, injuring two people, according to the officials.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/05 Ukraine rejects French diplomatic push |
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| SOURCE | https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/06/05/world/russia-ukraine-war-news https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/04/world/europe/ukraine-macron-russia-izium.html |
| GIST | <p>Ukraine rejected pressure to scale back its defenses and prepare for a diplomatic solution with Russia, highlighting the dim prospects for diplomacy as the war, which started more than 100 days ago, grinds to a deadly stalemate in the east.</p> <p>President Emmanuel Macron of France's assertion that Ukraine and its allies should refrain from humiliating Moscow to improve the possibility of a negotiated settlement touched off a fiery response from Kyiv.</p> <p>"Calls to avoid humiliation of Russia can only humiliate France and every other country that would call for it," Ukraine's foreign minister, Dmytro Kuleba, said in a post on social media.</p> <p>Mr. Macron has been one of President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia's most active interlocutors, both before and after the start of the war. But so far, his diplomatic efforts have had little result.</p> <p>He revived questions about how the war might be resolved, and about France's potential role, in an interview published late Friday.</p> <p>"We must not humiliate Russia, so that the day when the fighting stops we can build an exit ramp through diplomatic means," Mr. Macron said, adding that he saw France's role as that of a "mediating power."</p> <p>Russia has argued that despite Mr. Macron's efforts, Ukraine's allies are thwarting attempts to reach a diplomatic settlement. Sergey Lavrov, Russia's foreign minister, said in an interview on Saturday that the United States and its allies were using the war as a tool to restrain Russia.</p> <p>Critics have said that the best option for Russia is simply to pull back its forces. They have argued that seeking a mediated solution risks prolonging the war.</p> <p>"Appeasement of Russia distracts us from the people who really are cornered: the Ukrainians," wrote Timothy Snyder, a professor of history at Yale University.</p> <hr/> <p>KRAMATORSK, Ukraine — As Ukrainian troops tried to claw back territory and stave off a blistering Russian assault along the country's embattled eastern front, the government on Saturday sought also to repel a demand earlier in the day by President Emmanuel Macron of France that Moscow not be humiliated to improve chances of reaching a diplomatic solution.</p> <p>"We must not humiliate Russia so that the day when the fighting stops we can build an exit ramp through diplomatic means," Mr. Macron, who has sought to position himself as the world's chief negotiator with the Kremlin, said in an interview with French newspapers. "I am convinced that it is France's role to be a mediating power."</p> <p>Ukraine's foreign minister, Dmytro Kuleba, responded with a scathing post on social media.</p> <p>"Calls to avoid humiliation of Russia can only humiliate France and every other country that would call for it," Mr. Kuleba wrote. Instead, he argued, peace and the saving of lives could best be achieved by Russia being "put in its place."</p> <p>The exchange comes as the war has settled into what seems increasingly destined to be a slog.</p> <p>The Ukrainians and Russians both claimed Saturday to be inflicting decisive losses against one another in the battle for Sievierodonetsk, the last major city in the Luhansk region of eastern Ukraine still under Ukrainian control.</p> <p>But the fighting was not limited to that town. A senior Ukrainian official claimed on Saturday that the country's troops had reached a milestone in grinding down the Russian invasion force in eastern Ukraine.</p> |

Andriy Yermak, the chief of staff to President Volodymyr Zelensky, posted on the social networking site Telegram that most of a large Russian military unit had been destroyed in heavy fighting over the past weeks.

“Almost the entire 35th All-Russian Army was destroyed,” he wrote.

Mr. Yermak’s claim was supported by commentary from a Russian military blogger cited in a report by the influential Institute for the Study of War. Incompetent Russian commanders had failed to prepare troops for combat in a forested area near the city of Iziun, the report said.

The claim of the routing of the Russian unit could not be independently verified.

Ukrainian soldiers interviewed over the past week have described fierce fighting in the forests around Iziun, a strategic city that Russia is using as a base for attacks south toward the cities of Kramatorsk and Sloviansk. Ukrainian forces are also taking heavy losses, 60 to 100 fatalities a day, Mr. Zelensky said recently.

The British Defense Ministry said Saturday that Russia’s recent use of airstrikes and artillery fire has been a factor in its limited success in Ukraine’s east, a contrast with its largely ineffective air attacks earlier in the war. The Russian reliance on long-range strikes has probably depleted the country’s stock of precision-guided missiles, leading to more use of unguided munitions that can cause substantial civilian casualties, the ministry said.

Also on Saturday, an air-launched cruise missile hit the Odesa region on Ukraine’s Black Sea coast, Odesa city officials said on Telegram. The missile struck a mostly agricultural area with warehouses, injuring two people, according to the officials.

And Russian and Ukrainian officials traded blame for the burning of the main temple of the All Saints hermitage, a 16th-century monastery in eastern Ukraine that is considered one of the three most sacred sites in Ukraine for Orthodox believers.

The increasing terror from the sky came a day after Ukraine, on occasion of the 100th day of the war, took stock of its successes in holding back and in key places repelling the invasion by Russia, which had sought to quickly conquer the capital, Kyiv, and topple the government. Mr. Zelensky insisted “victory will be ours” and announced that 50 foreign embassies had resumed activities in the capital.

But on the 101st day, Ukraine faced anew the harsh realities on the ground, and increasingly from overhead.

Russia’s airstrikes provided cover to their troops engaged in the bitter fighting in the contested city of Sievierodonetsk.

And Russian troops continued to target the last remaining bridge into Sievierodonetsk to keep Ukraine from moving in reinforcements, food and medicine into a city that has become the main theater of war and the focus of Russia’s war machine. Despite its early and devastating setbacks, Russia has come to occupy a fifth of the country.

The intensity of the Russian attack and frequency of Russian reinforcements to Sievierodonetsk led to predictions that the city would soon fall. But Serhiy Haidai, the governor of Luhansk province, who recently had a dour prognosis for the city’s survival, told Ukraine’s national television that Ukrainian troops had retaken 20 percent of the territory they had lost, adding that it was “not realistic” the city would fall in the next two weeks.

As Ukrainian forces try to take back territory in the East, its State Emergency Services of Ukraine has removed 127,393 explosive devices, with the efforts focused mostly on urban areas in the Kyiv, Sumy

and Zhytomyr regions that were occupied by Russia early in the war, according to a report by the United Nations Development Program.

Russia's retreat from those areas has made them more accessible for clear-up operations, the report said, adding that Ukrainians had covered an area of more than 28,714 square kilometers (more than 11,000 square miles) but that [it could take years](#) to clear all of the mines in Ukraine. Ukrainian forces have also launched a counteroffensive near the occupied city of Kherson in the country's south.

But a punishing, costly and tragic military stalemate is increasingly foreseen by experts. Ukraine has been outgunned, but will soon receive long-range M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems, commonly known as HIMARS, from the United States. The exchanges of evermore lethal firepower will likely add to the many millions of people who have already been displaced, a death toll of at least 4,000 civilians and a Ukrainian economy already in tatters with roughly \$100 billion in losses.

The Kremlin's spokesman, Dmitri S. Peskov, said on Friday that Russia would continue what it calls a "special military operation" in Ukraine until "all goals have been attained."

But one thing Russia had already achieved was international isolation and a solidifying of the Western alliance against it. Jens Stoltenberg, NATO's secretary general, met Friday with Prime Minister Sanna Marin of Finland in Washington about the country's application to the military alliance. He has advised allies to be prepared for "the long haul" and warned this week that the conflict had become a "war of attrition."

On Saturday, an American warship, the U.S.S. Kearsarge, was moored in Stockholm, Sweden, with 26 warplanes and 2,400 Marines and sailors aboard, a symbol of the protection that NATO membership would offer Sweden and Finland, both of which are seeking to join.

As the battle lines become more entrenched between Russia and the West, experts predict Russian cyberattacks, global disinformation campaigns and a potential food crisis prompted by a Russian naval blockade. Ukraine is one of the world's leading exporters of grain and cooking oil, and President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia has been accused by Western leaders of trying to leverage its control of those supplies to gain relief from sanctions.

And those sanctions continued to be felt. On Friday, Marriott became the latest multinational to suspend operations in Russia, where it had operated for 25 years. The hotel chain said restrictions set by Western governments made it impossible to keep going.

Ukraine's fighting has for now preserved its statehood, but what that state would eventually look like is another matter. Russia's strategy is essentially to pulverize specific areas with seemingly indiscriminate artillery shelling, killing or forcing to flee whoever is there before rolling in to stake the territory for Moscow.

It is a brutal way of waging war that some experts have compared to World War I and Ukrainian officials have called "medieval." Craters from bombs and artillery shells gouge fields. Farmers collect rocket casings from cluster bombs in their barns.

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| HEADLINE | 06/05 Bangladesh depot disaster; dozens killed |
| SOURCE | https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/05/world/asia/bangladesh-fire-explosion.html |
| GIST | <p>DHAKA, Bangladesh — At least 39 people were killed and hundreds more suffered burns when a fire at a container depot in Bangladesh set off a series of explosions, officials said on Sunday.</p> <p>Many people were in critical condition in hospital burn wards, according to local officials, who feared the death toll would rise. By noon, firefighters were still trying to contain the blaze, which began around 10:45</p> |

p.m. Saturday at B.M. Container Depot in the town of Sitakunda, about 10 miles from Chattogram, Bangladesh's main port.

After the first firefighters arrived, a large explosion rocked the depot, causing the flames to spread. At least five firefighters were killed in that blast, and 14 others were wounded, officials said. More explosions followed, continuing well into Sunday morning.

The cause of the disaster, at one of Bangladesh's largest inland container depots, was not immediately clear. Attempts to contact executives at the company that runs the depot were not immediately successful.

Shahadat Hossain, the senior government official for Sitakunda, said that a large amount of hydrogen peroxide may have been stored at the depot, along with other goods. "We cannot say anything further right now," he said.

Hundreds of people were admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital, said Dr. Mohammed Elias Chowdhury, the civil surgeon for Chattogram, which is also known as Chittagong. "Many of them are critical," he said. "Some people have 60 to 70 percent burns on their bodies."

Photos from the hospital showed wounded people laid out on the floor, waiting for treatment. Dr. Chowdhury said all leave had been canceled for doctors and other staff members at the hospital.

Hasan Mahmud Arafat, 25, a university student who volunteered to help at the hospital, said all beds in the burn units were full and that ambulance sirens had blared all night.

"I saw thousands of people come to the hospital to donate blood," he said. "I saw locals come to the hospital with hand fans — they were fanning the patients who were waiting to get a bed or who were admitted to the makeshift beds."

[Mass-casualty fires](#) have been a recurring problem in Bangladesh. In July, a factory fire in the city of Narayanganj killed at least 51 people.

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| HEADLINE | 06/04 Tropical storm heavy rain in Florida |
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| SOURCE | https://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2022/06/04/storm-Florida-flooding/9251654347923/ https://www.washingtonpost.com/weather/2022/06/04/miami-flooding-florida-storm-alex/ |
| GIST | <p>June 4 (UPI) -- A storm that's forecast to become the first named tropical system of the Atlantic hurricane season has dumped heavy rain on South Florida, causing dangerous flash flooding in Miami on Saturday.</p> <p>The National Weather Service issued a flash flood warning for parts of Miami-Dade County after the storm dumped some 9.73 inches on Miami over 72 hours.</p> <p>The city typically receives an average of 10.51 inches of rainfall over the entire month of June. The cities of Biscayne Park and Key Largo received 11.61 inches and 11 inches of rain, respectively.</p> <p>WPLG-TV in Miami reported that the high water levels stalled and stranded vehicles in the Miami region. The city of Miami encouraged residents to remain home during the inclement weather.</p> <p>AccuWeather forecasters said South Florida residents could expect relief from the rain in the late morning as a break in the storms moves through the area. Another round of storms, though, were expected later in the day.</p> <p>The storms are part of a tropical cyclone system that's expected to strengthen to tropical storm strength sometime Saturday. If it does, it'll be the first named storm of the Atlantic hurricane season -- Alex.</p> |

The system began as the eastern Pacific Ocean's [first storm](#) of the season last week -- Tropical Storm Agatha.

It's not named Alex yet, but a waterlogged tropical rainstorm has drenched and flooded parts of South Florida. Up to 10 inches of rain inundated Miami between Friday and Saturday morning, turning downtown streets into rivers and submerging vehicles.

[Flash flood warnings](#) covered much of the Broward and Miami-Dade coastlines early Saturday, in effect through around midday, including Miami, Hollywood, Fort Lauderdale and Boca Raton. Widespread totals of 5 to 8 inches have fallen, with a few locales registering more than 10 inches.

While the tropical disturbance responsible for the torrents has not yet earned a name, it is predicted to become Tropical Storm Alex by late Saturday or Sunday — once it crosses the Florida Peninsula and enters the Atlantic Ocean.

The disturbance, centered near the southwest coast of Florida on Saturday morning, is forecast to generate heavy rain over the southern peninsula through around midday Saturday with “considerable flash and urban flooding,” according to the National Hurricane Center. After that, showers should become more intermittent and eventually taper off.

Significant flooding was reported in downtown Miami on Friday night into early Saturday as a result of the disturbance, with roadways becoming inundated under several feet of water.

“At this time [@CityofMiamiFire](#) is responding to multiple calls of cars stuck in the water,” tweeted a public information officer with the City of Miami-Fire Rescue early Saturday. “Please stay off the road and do not drive through floods.”

Videos posted to social media depicted vehicles submerged to their hoods, in some cases still continuing to drive through flooded roadways. Other cars were completely stranded.

Nearly a foot of rain has been measured in downtown Miami, where an observer reported emptying an 11-inch rain gauge while downpours continued to soak the region. As of 9 a.m. Eastern time, here were some of the top rainfall reports:

- 11.05 inches, Miami
- 10.98 inches, Biscayne Park
- 9.70 inches, Key Largo
- 9.36 inches, Palmetto Bay
- 9.08 inches, Coral Terrace
- 8.83 inches, Margate
- 8.82 inches, Lindgren Acres, Miami-Dade
- 8.14 inches, Naples

A general 4 to 6 inches fell between Fort Myers and West Palm Beach, with amounts quickly dropping off north of there. Most of the greater Tampa area saw a half-inch to an inch, with a trace to a tenth of an inch in the Orlando metro.

The southern cutoff to the rainfall was equally sharp, with 1 to 3 inches in the Lower Keys and nearly 10 for the Upper Keys.

The tropical rainstorm triggered serious flooding Friday in western and central Cuba, where at least two people died, [according to the BBC](#).

The system was partially born from the remnants of Hurricane Agatha, blamed for at least nine deaths in southern Mexico, where it was the strongest storm on record to make landfall during May.

Why no name yet?

The tropical rainstorm dousing South Florida contains maximum winds up to 40 mph, while tornadic waterspouts have been spinning ominously through the nearshore waters. For all intents and purposes, South Florida has been dealing with tropical storm conditions.

Structurally, however, the system doesn't fit the bill it needs to get a name, and it's not until after the swirling storm's center makes it east of Florida that it is likely to meet the requirements. But tropical storm warnings remain in effect for the west coast of Florida from Bonita Beach to Card Sound Bridge, the east coast of Florida south of the Volusia/Brevard County Line to Card Sound Bridge and parts of the northwestern Bahamas.

The requirements for a system to be designated a tropical storm and receive a name are rigid. Winds must be sustained at 39 mph or greater within the storm, and there must also exist a cohesive central vortex.

The former criterion has been met, but the latter has not: There is a swirl discernible in the low-level cumulus field, as is visible below, but it doesn't extend vertically.

In fact, there is hardly any concentrated circulation in the upper-level winds as derived by a satellite-mounted scatterometer, or a device that ascertains wind by tracking cloud and ocean wave moments. "The system has gone the wrong way in becoming a tropical cyclone," the Hurricane Center wrote early Saturday.

The Hurricane Center does expect Alex to finally form late Saturday into Sunday. Computer models call for the disturbance to "develop and maintain a more familiar tropical cyclone-like structure as it heads northeastward and east-northeastward over the western Atlantic through Monday," the center wrote.

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| HEADLINE | 06/03 US returns more land to SKorea |
| SOURCE | https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2022/06/03/Yongsan-Garrison-US-military-land-handover-park/5591654244866/ |
| GIST | <p>SEOUL, June 3 (UPI) -- The United States transferred land from its former military headquarters in Seoul to South Korea, officials said Friday, boosting long-standing plans to turn the garrison into a public park.</p> <p>United States Forces Korea handed over 51,000 square meters -- about 12 acres -- from Yongsan Garrison in central Seoul, according to a statement by South Korea's Office for Government Policy Coordination.</p> <p>Yongsan was the headquarters of USFK and the United Nations Command from the end of the 1950-53 Korean War until 2018, when both commands relocated to Camp Humphreys in Pyeongtaek, around 40 miles south of Seoul. It was initially established as a military base in 1904 by the Japanese during their colonial occupation of Korea and has been off-limits to the public ever since.</p> <p>South Korea has been eager to develop Yongsan, which sits on a prime location, into a national park in the heart of the capital city.</p> <p>Friday's handover follows transfers made in February and May. South Korea has now received around 30% of the garrison's roughly 500 acres, the statement said.</p> <p>Redevelopment plans have picked up steam as newly inaugurated South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol moved his presidential office to the former defense ministry headquarters, located right next to the Yongsan site.</p> <p>On Thursday, South Korea's land ministry announced it would open a section of the future Yongsan park to the public on a trial basis in June, giving ordinary citizens access to the former base for the first time in almost 120 years.</p> |

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| | <p>"This pilot opening is very meaningful for the people in that Yongsan Garrison, which had been a closed space for a long time, will be transformed into an open space with the relocation of the presidential office," Won Hee-ryong, minister of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, said in a statement.</p> <p>"We will continue to communicate with the people and actively receive their opinions during the construction project so that they can feel that the Yongsan park finally belongs to them," he said.</p> <p>The handover is part of the U.S. military's ongoing moves to consolidate its 28,500 troops to garrisons in Pyeongtaek and Daegu, located roughly 200 miles southeast of the capital.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/04 Recall: 8 different cheese products |
| SOURCE | https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/food/2022/06/04/cheeses-recalled-listeria-9-states/7512171001/ |
| GIST | <p>Eight different cheese products sold in nine states are being recalled for having "the potential to be contaminated" with the bacteria that causes listeria, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration said this week. Paris Brothers, Inc. is recalling several of its cheddar, brie and pepper jack products that were produced in early May.</p> <p>The now-recalled cheeses were sent for distribution in grocery stores, including Price Chopper and Super Saver, in nine states: Arizona, Florida, Iowa, Kansas, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma and South Dakota.</p> <p>The following eight products (produced May 4, 5 and 6) are in recall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cottonwood River Cheddar • D'amir Brie Double Crème French Brie • Milton Prairie Breeze White Cheddar Style • Milton Tomato Garlic Cheddar • Paris Brothers Mild Cheddar • Paris Brothers Colby Jack • Paris Brothers Pepper Jack • Cervasi Pecorino Romano <p>According to the FDA's Wednesday announcement, the presence of <i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>, the bacteria that causes listeria infections, was found during the agency's routine sampling. To date, no illnesses have been reported.</p> <p>Listeria, or listeriosis, is an infection that results from eating contaminated food. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an estimated 1,600 people get listeria each year, and about 260 die.</p> <p>Healthy people rarely get ill from a listeria infection, the Mayo Clinic says, but the disease can be very serious (and sometimes fatal) for many pregnant people, newborns, older adults and those with weakened immune systems.</p> <p>For the Paris Brothers recall, the FDA has provided a list of the over 90 retail locations where the recalled cheeses were distributed. Consumers who purchased the affected products can also return the cheese for a refund and learn more here.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/05 NKorea launches short range missiles |
| SOURCE | https://www.wsj.com/articles/north-korea-launches-short-range-missiles-into-sea-11654396185?mod=hp_listb_pos2 |
| GIST | SEOUL—North Korea fired eight short-range ballistic missiles on Sunday, South Korea's military said, a day after a special U.S. envoy departed from Seoul. |

The missiles were fired between 9:08 a.m. and 9:43 a.m. from four different regions and landed in the sea between the Korean Peninsula and Japan, Seoul's military said. The missiles reached altitudes of roughly 15 to 56 miles and traveled a range of 68 to 416 miles.

Japanese defense minister Nobuo Kishi said North Korea may have launched multiple missiles at once to improve its capability to launch missiles continuously, which would be necessary for a saturation attack. The missiles fell outside of Japan's exclusive economic zone.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff called North Korea's launches serious provocations that undermine peace on the Korean Peninsula and beyond.

The U.S. Indo-Pacific Command said that the multiple ballistic missile launches highlight the destabilizing impact of North Korea's illicit weapons program, but that the event didn't pose an immediate threat.

In recent weeks, [North Korea has fired a range of missiles](#), including [an intercontinental ballistic missile](#) capable of reaching the U.S. mainland. U.S. Special Representative Sung Kim said North Korea was continuing preparations for its seventh nuclear test when he met his counterparts from South Korea and Japan in Seoul this past week.

While in Seoul, the nuclear envoys of the three countries condemned North Korea's recent launches as destabilizing to the region and violating United Nations Security Council resolutions. They called on Pyongyang to cease its "unlawful and dangerous behavior" and to return to dialogue.

The missiles were launched a day after South Korea and the U.S. ended joint military drills, which involved an American aircraft carrier for the first time in more than four years. South Korean and American ships concluded three days of drills in international waters off the Japanese island of Okinawa, which involved air defense, antiship, anti-submarine and maritime interdiction operations, according to South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff.

President Biden recently agreed with new South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol to begin planning the resumption of joint military field exercises with South Korea and pledged that the U.S. would be prepared to send nuclear-capable military assets such as bombers to Seoul. North Korea has criticized previous joint drills as "hostile policies" toward Pyongyang.

North Korea has conducted more than a dozen missile tests this year despite reporting [a nationwide outbreak of Covid-19](#) that leader Kim Jong Un has called the nation's worst-ever crisis.

Last month, the U.S. proposed more U.N. sanctions on North Korea over its recent provocations but China and Russia vetoed the resolution.

The U.S. and South Korea [have offered aid](#) to North Korea to help with the Covid outbreak but Pyongyang hasn't responded to the outreach. North Korea has gradually expanded its military arsenal since denuclearization talks broke down in 2019.

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| HEADLINE | 06/04 Baby formula shortage to last weeks longer |
| SOURCE | https://www.wsj.com/articles/baby-formula-shortage-expected-to-persist-weeks-longer-11654344000?mod=hp_lead_pos11 |
| GIST | <p>Baby formula will remain hard to find until at least mid-July, industry executives said, despite efforts by manufacturers, the White House and regulators to ease a monthslong shortage.</p> <p>Abbott Laboratories, maker of Similac, the largest baby-formula brand by sales in the U.S., resumed production Saturday at its Sturgis, Mich., plant for the first time since February. That factory had produced roughly one-fifth of the infant formula in the country, and left many shelves empty when it issued a recall and paused operations there nearly four months ago.</p> |

The Abbott factory's initial production runs will include only specialty formulas for children with severe allergies or medical conditions, reaching healthcare providers, hospitals and consumers around June 20. After boosting supplies of those varieties, such as EleCare Jr., Abbott will move on to producing regular Similac formula, with supplies hitting stores several weeks later, said a person familiar with the matter.

Meanwhile, about 20% to 25% of formula products remain out of stock in U.S. stores as of last week, according to market research firm IRI. Shortages are more acute in some states, including rural areas of Kansas, Minnesota, Texas, Utah and Alaska, the IRI data show.

"We have yet to see any type of recovery," said Arthur Ackles, vice president of merchandising and buying for retailer Roche Bros.

Massachusetts-based Roche Bros. has been dealing with sporadic shortages of baby formula since February, and the chain continues to receive a fraction of the quantities it orders, Mr. Ackles said. Roche's suppliers, he said, haven't specified when their inventory will improve.

The Biden administration's effort in recent weeks to fly in baby formula from other countries has so far [brought in hypoallergenic varieties](#), officials said. Shipments of regular baby formula are expected to begin arriving June 9 from two manufacturers in the U.K. and Australia, totaling enough powder to make about 9 million 8-ounce bottles, the White House said.

Officials said U.K. and Australian brands would continue to send additional shipments, up to the equivalent of roughly 80 million 8-ounce bottles. The Food and Drug Administration said Friday that [Nestlé](#) SA will also send Gerber formula from Mexico to make 33 million 8-ounce bottles, expected to be available from July through October.

In a typical week, U.S. consumers purchase enough powdered formula to make over 50 million 8-ounce bottles, according to sales and pricing data from IRI.

[Efforts to increase production](#) at other stateside factories have made up for much of the loss from the Abbott factory being offline, the White House said last month. But that has not been enough to keep up with rising demand. From Jan. 1 through May 8, sales volumes of powdered formula in the U.S. increased 5%, according to IRI. The full-year growth rate was 1.5% in 2021 and 0.4% in 2020.

Health practitioners said more parents [have relied on formula over breast-feeding](#) since the pandemic began. More recently, some consumers have stockpiled, deepening supply problems, retailers said.

In Georgia, Savannah Grider said she hasn't had luck finding formula for her 10-month-old daughter. About three weeks ago, she said, a friend in North Dakota started sending her formula, which remains in stock at the military base where Ms. Grider's friend lives.

Ms. Grider said she has been trying to limit how often she feeds formula and is trying more solid foods, since her daughter has had stomach problems from trying different brands.

Some retailers said there are early signs of improvement. Giant Eagle Inc., a supermarket chain based in Pennsylvania, said the strain is easing on some products, while Iowa-based Hy-Vee Inc. said it expects to get more products, including Gerber and Enfamil, in the coming weeks, if not days. Hy-Vee said it received some shipments of Similac formula last weekend and will be getting more this weekend.

But [Kroger](#) Co., the biggest U.S. supermarket company by sales, said formula supplies haven't noticeably improved, and [the chain is still implementing a purchase limit](#) of four containers per customer.

At Associated Wholesale Grocers, Inc., the nation's biggest wholesaler for more than 3,000 grocery stores, Chief Executive Officer David Smith said there has been little change in formula supply in recent weeks, even as his suppliers have said European products have entered the U.S. supply chain.

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| | <p>Roche Bros. has been getting formula deliveries once a week, compared with daily deliveries that were the norm before the shortage started, Mr. Ackles said, adding that hoarding among consumers worsened the problem earlier in the year. These days, Roche's stores don't have enough products for shoppers to stockpile, but Mr. Ackles said he fears panic buying could resume when supplies improve.</p> <p>Amanda Dolly, who has two 10-month-old boys, said she is seeing more formula in her nearby stores but not the hypoallergenic kind she needs for one of her sons.</p> <p>"He is breaking out from [regular formula] really bad," said Ms. Dolly, who lives in Enterprise, W.Va. She said she is thinking about giving her son almond milk after she uses up the two cans of formula she got from a friend.</p> <p>Leah McGrath, corporate dietitian at North Carolina-based grocer Ingles Markets Inc., said she hasn't noticed an immediate difference in supply after some products were flown in from overseas. Instead, she said, she is seeing some people try to sell multiple cans of formula they bought, and some parents getting scammed by such sellers.</p> <p>"I don't think the level of concern and panic has abated at all," she said.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/04 Hong Kong police quash massacre vigil |
| SOURCE | https://www.wsj.com/articles/hong-kong-police-quash-vigil-to-mark-tiananmen-square-massacre-11654362479?mod=hp_lead_pos4 |
| GIST | <p>HONG KONG—Hong Kong police blanketed a busy shopping district late Saturday and stopped people entering a park that traditionally held a mass candlelight vigil on the anniversary of the 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre, a memorial event that is now banned.</p> <p>Much of the park was barricaded throughout Saturday, but hundreds of people quietly flowed around the park's perimeter in the evening. Many who staged small acts of defiance were stopped and searched by police amid an overwhelming security presence. Occasional scuffles broke out.</p> <p>Armed police took away at least four activists, the political party they belonged to said. One of them, who had written the words "commemorating June 4th" on his face mask—which are mandatory in public in Hong Kong as part of anti-Covid measures—was arrested for allegedly inciting an unauthorized assembly. The other three were let go after questioning, according to the group.</p> <p>Hong Kong's police force said it arrested six people between 19 and 80 years old as of 11:30 p.m., including a foreign national. They were held on suspicion of possessing a weapon, obstructing police officers and inciting an unauthorized assembly. Police had warned of heavy jail terms for anyone gathering unlawfully, part of a national-security crackdown to eliminate political dissent.</p> <p>The vigil to commemorate pro-democracy protesters gunned down by Chinese soldiers 33 years ago has been banned since 2020, with Hong Kong authorities in part citing pandemic restrictions. More than two dozen people have been jailed for taking part, organizing or inciting others to attend the vigil over the past two years.</p> <p>Placing an electric candle near the window of a nearby parking lot looking over the park at around 8 p.m., a woman surnamed Lau took a photo of it against the backdrop of empty football pitches that in the past were occupied by a sea of candlelights.</p> <p>The 30-year-old said she used to attend the vigil every year until it was banned. She said she was searched by police as she headed toward the park, though they didn't find the electric candle.</p> |

“I think it’s because they think even small sparks could start a prairie fire,” she said. Mourning for victims of the tragedy, she said, should not be something you need to do stealthily.

Lighting flames of remembrance was taken up by Western diplomats based in Hong Kong. Local consulates representing the U.S., Finland and the European Union were among those that posted images of lighted candles placed near their windows. The diplomatic missions of Australia, New Zealand, Poland and others shared photos of candles or made statements in memory of the 1989 massacre.

“As an eyewitness in Beijing during 1989 to a moment of history, each year on 4 June I reflect as well as remember,” Brian Davidson, the top British diplomat in Hong Kong, wrote on the consulate’s Facebook account.

The actions ratcheted up tensions between China and governments in the West, which have been critical of China’s efforts to stamp out people’s freedoms in Hong Kong. Authorities in the city have jailed political opponents, outlawed street protests and forced critical media outlets to close.

“To the people of China and to those who continue to stand against injustice and seek freedom, we will not forget June 4,” U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Friday.

The office of China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Hong Kong said it rejected what it called political tricks of the foreign missions, urging them to “stop playing with fire.”

Mentions of Tiananmen remain forbidden on mainland China. Users on China’s major social-media platforms such as Twitter-like Weibo, Wechat and short-video platform Douyin found themselves unable to update or change their profile pictures and personal status on June 4, the day of the anniversary.

Activists and people who recently left Hong Kong organized dozens of June 4 memorial events from New York to London, including documentary and theater screenings as well as public gatherings.

Hong Kong’s Victoria Park vigil was for decades the biggest Tiananmen memorial event in the world. It was considered a touchstone of the city’s right to free expression and its turnout was sometimes taken as a barometer of dissatisfaction toward authorities—there was a huge turnout in 2019, just days before mass antigovernment protests broke out across the city.

Some years, tens of thousands of people attended and sang songs, watched historical footage from 1989 and listened to speeches denouncing China’s one-party rule made by activists, many of whom are now behind bars.

Ahead of the June 4 anniversary, Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam referred to the city’s national-security law, imposed by China in June 2020, and public-health restrictions when asked if it would be illegal to commemorate the 1989 massacre.

Police set up roadblocks around the area Saturday afternoon and hundreds patrolled around Causeway Bay, the district near Victoria Park. Officers wearing stab-proof vests frisked many throughout the day, using loudhailers asking people not to congregate, or risk getting fined under anti-Covid-19 rules on social gatherings.

Some weren’t deterred. A young couple walked with their mobile-phone flashlights switched on, even though the street was bright with storefront floodlights. A man wearing a black cap and mask held up an image of a candle displayed on his phone.

Police arrested Chinese dissident Lau San-ching for allegedly inciting an unauthorized assembly, according to the League of Social Democrats, of which Mr. Lau is a member. The 69-year-old appeared alone at Victoria Park near dusk. He was wearing a mask referring to June 4 and a shirt printed with the portrait of labor rights activist Li Wangyang, one of the leading figures at the 1989 student protests who

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| | <p>died while under security surveillance in 2012. Mr. Lau was a political prisoner in China for 10 years until 1991.</p> <p>Three other members of the group, including Chairwoman Chan Po-ying, were also led away by police in a separate incident but were let go after questioning, the political party said.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/04 Housing boom fails lift all homes over peak |
| SOURCE | https://www.wsj.com/articles/housing-boom-fails-to-lift-all-homes-above-previous-cycles-peak-11654335001?mod=hp_lead_pos1 |
| GIST | <p>The housing boom of the past two years propelled U.S. home prices to record highs throughout the country. But in hundreds of cities, the red-hot market hasn't yet brought back prices to where they stood about 15 years ago.</p> <p>Prices fell so hard during the subprime crisis or climbed back so gradually in these cities that the current buying wave is only beginning to make even a homeowner who bought there during the last boom.</p> <p>The status applies to 477 U.S. cities, where the typical home value at the end of April was below peak levels from the housing boom in the early 2000s, according to an analysis by Zillow Group Inc. for The Wall Street Journal.</p> <p>Home values in Detroit, Flint, Mich., and Hartford, Conn., were among those below peak, Zillow found by using its home-value estimates. In cities including Chicago, Cleveland and Newark, N.J., typical home values only exceeded their precrisis peaks for the first time in April. The values in the analysis aren't adjusted for inflation, which means that accounting for inflation, the number of homes still below peak levels would be higher.</p> <p>The economic recovery since the 2007-09 recession has been uneven, with some cities thriving with high-paying tech jobs and soaring home prices while others struggled. Even as remote work during the Covid-19 pandemic enabled more workers to live anywhere, the population has grown in cities such as Austin, Texas, and Phoenix but has continued to shrink in cities such as Detroit and Cleveland.</p> <p>The laggards represent only a fraction of the overall population, in part because the populations of many of the cities that have yet to reach their precrisis peaks are relatively small.</p> <p>Moreover, more than 400 of the cities have typical home values that are at least 80% of their precrisis peaks, Zillow said. That means rising home values could push many above their former peaks this spring or summer.</p> <p>Their slow return to former peaks, however, highlights the decline or stagnation of a surprising number of American communities.</p> <p>"The growth since 2006 has very much been a growth that's associated with rising inequity," said Susan Wachter, a professor of real estate and finance at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School. "For homeowners, this has been a period of immense wealth appreciation, but in these cities and metros, homeowners have not participated in that" to the same extent, she said.</p> <p>The current boom has been unusually widespread, with home prices rising rapidly and buyers competing in bidding wars in big cities and small towns alike. The typical home value nationwide stood at \$344,141 in April, up 58% from its April 2007 peak of \$218,148, according to Zillow.</p> <p>But in Detroit, a typical home was valued at \$66,015 at the end of April, below the city's August 2006 peak of \$74,180. And in Chicago, the typical home value of \$315,196 in April sits just above the city's March 2007 peak of \$314,917. Especially adjusted for inflation, some homeowners who bought in these cities during the last peak still would be unlikely to sell for a profit today.</p> |

Homeowners in places with slow home-price growth [have missed out on much of the wealth creation](#) tied to the housing market's years of gains. Many have built equity by paying off some of the principal on their mortgage loans. But about 86% of wealth appreciation for the typical U.S. homeowner between 2011 and 2021 came from price appreciation, according to a March study by the National Association of Realtors.

Wide disparities in home-price appreciation often exist within cities. The areas where home values have been stagnant are often historically Black homeowner-occupied areas, said Alan Mallach, a senior fellow at the Center for Community Progress, who focuses on the revitalization of cities and neighborhoods.

In Chicago, a north-side ZIP Code near the River West neighborhood, which is majority white, had a typical home value of \$530,586 in April, up 21% from its previous peak in 2007, according to Zillow. But a ZIP Code on Chicago's southwest side near the Little Village neighborhood, which is mostly Hispanic and Black, had a typical home value of \$214,928 in April, about 40% below its 2007 peak.

The Chicago neighborhoods where home prices have lagged behind have lower incomes and had higher rates of foreclosures and distressed sales following the housing crash, said Maude Toussaint-Comeau, senior economist and economic adviser at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago.

"Those areas were hit the hardest, and we saw that they also took the longest to recover," she said.

The precrisis peak prices in some areas also were inflated by subprime mortgage lending and easy access to credit, said Geoff Smith, executive director of the Institute for Housing Studies at DePaul University.

Cities with lagging housing markets can struggle to raise enough revenue through property taxes, which makes it difficult to provide municipal services that attract new residents, Prof. Wachter said.

On the other hand, [cities with relatively affordable housing are increasingly in demand](#) as home prices continue to hit new highs and [mortgage rates climb](#), said Ed Pinto, director of the AEI Housing Center at the American Enterprise Institute.

"They have lots of housing, and it's reasonably priced," he said of cities such as Cleveland and Detroit. "How do they make themselves attractive to the work-from-home employee?"

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| HEADLINE | 06/04 Severe Covid 'more likely in polluted areas' |
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| SOURCE | https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/04/severe-covid-cases-more-likely-in-highly-polluted-areas |
| GIST | <p>People who contract Covid-19 are more likely to suffer severe symptoms if they have been exposed to air pollution for long periods.</p> <p>A study found that people who live in places where there are high levels of the atmospheric pollutant nitrogen dioxide had higher chances of ending up in intensive care units (ICUs) or of needing mechanical ventilation after they had caught Covid.</p> <p>Nitrogen dioxide is released into the atmosphere when fossil fuels are burned, and the gas is known to have harmful effects on people's lungs. In particular, endothelial cells – which form a thin membrane lining the inside of the heart and blood vessels – become damaged, and this inhibits the transfer of oxygen from inhaled breath to a person's blood.</p> <p>"Our results show a positive association between long-term nitrogen dioxide exposure and Covid-19 fatality and Covid-19 incidence rate," said the team of German researchers, who were led by Susanne Koch, of Universitätsmedizin Berlin, a large teaching hospital.</p> <p>Scientists had previously made links between Covid and air pollution, but few studies have concentrated on cases that were particularly severe or on underlying health conditions in those affected by the disease.</p> |

Koch and her team used air pollution data to calculate average levels of nitrogen dioxide for each county in Germany. The highest was found in Frankfurt, while the lowest was experienced in Suhl, a small county in Thuringia, the group revealed in its report, which was presented last week to Euroanaesthesia, the annual meeting of the European Society of Anaesthesiology and Intensive Care in Milan.

The group also studied data on how many Covid patients in German hospitals had required ICU treatment and mechanical ventilation during one month in 2020. These figures were adjusted for other factors, such as pre-existing health conditions.

After analysing their results, the team reported that on average, 28 ICU beds and 19 ventilators were needed for Covid patients in each of the 10 counties that had the lowest long-term nitrogen dioxide exposure. These figures contrasted with an average of 144 ICU beds and 102 ventilators needed in the 10 counties with the highest long-term exposure.

The research has worrying implications. In the UK, [75% of urban areas in 2019 had illegal levels of air pollution](#), underscoring the fact that the British government has made almost no progress on legal obligations that should have been met in 2010. During lockdown, there was a temporary decrease in nitrogen in some areas. However, traffic and pollution are returning to past levels in many towns and cities.

According to the Royal College of Physicians, air pollution [causes the equivalent of 40,000 early deaths a year](#), and has been linked to cancer, asthma, stroke and heart disease, diabetes, obesity and changes linked to dementia. Now evidence is mounting that Covid should be added to this list.

The German study did not prove a causative relationship between air pollution and severe Covid, the researchers admitted. However, they did suggest a plausible causal link that could explain the relationship between severe Covid and levels of nitrogen dioxide in the atmosphere.

Coronavirus is known to bind to the Ace-2 receptor when it enters cells after infecting a person. This receptor has many key roles, one of which involves helping the body to regulate levels of angiotensin II, a protein that increases inflammation. In other words, Ace-2 helps to put the brakes on inflammation.

However, when Covid binds to Ace-2, these brakes are removed. It is also known that air pollution causes a similar release of controls over angiotensin II. So the combination of Covid and long-term air pollution exposure would lead to more severe inflammation, more severe Covid and more need for ICUs and mechanical ventilation, the team argued.

“Exposure to ambient air pollution can contribute a range of other conditions, including heart attacks, strokes, asthma and lung cancer, and will continue to harm health long after the Covid-19 pandemic ends,” added Koch. “A transition to renewable energy, clean transportation and sustainable agriculture is urgently needed to improve air quality. Reducing emissions won’t just help to limit climate crisis, it will improve the health and the quality of life of people around the world.”

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| HEADLINE | 06/04 Ukraine recaptures 20% Sievierodonetsk |
| SOURCE | https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/04/ukraine-counterattack-recaptures-parts-of-sieverodonetsk-in-donbas |
| GIST | <p>Ukraine has staged a counterattack on the frontline city of Sievierodonetsk and recaptured a fifth of the city it had previously lost to the Russian invaders, according to the head of the region.</p> <p>Serhiy Haidai, governor of Luhansk, said Russian forces were giving up recent gains in the city, as reports also emerged of foreign fighters joining the battle for the easternmost city held by Kyiv in the fiercely contested Donbas.</p> |

The governor told Ukrainian television that Russia had “previously managed to capture most of the city” – but added in a tweet that the military had pushed them back by 20%. “They are really suffering huge losses,” he said.

The claims are hard to verify amid the heavy fighting. The Russians have concentrated their forces on trying to surround and capture the city in the past two weeks, advancing at a rate of 500 metres to a kilometre a day.

Ukrainians fighting on the eastern frontline estimated that their forces controlled “around 30%” of Sievierodonetsk on Saturday, greater than some rough estimates from late last week. They said Russian forces were running out of infantry troops and were unable to push forward.

Slava Vladimirovich, a Ukrainian soldier with the Donbas battalion, said the Russian army was pounding the neighbouring city of Lysychansk.

Two civilians died in a Russian artillery attack, he said. Thousands of civilians were still in the city, but many seemed reluctant to leave. “We were supposed to evacuate ten people. Only three turned up. Poor people are afraid of losing what little they have. There is no water in the city and long queues of civilians waiting at distribution points.”

Foreign fighters from countries including Australia, Georgia, France and Brazil were also being deployed by Ukraine in Sievierodonetsk, according to a video report circulating widely. It features an interview with a masked soldier, who said he was from Australia, saying he had “stepped up” to join the fighting.

A second soldier, speaking English with an American accent, said he was “a 22-year-old kid” from Georgia and promised to help push Russians back. “We’re on the right side of the history,” he added.

But the risks to foreign fighters in a brutal and deadly conflict remain considerable. Ukraine’s International Legion acknowledged on Saturday that four people from the Netherlands, Australia, Germany and France had been killed.

It named them as Ronald Vogelaar, Michael O’Neill, Björn Benjamin Clavis and Wilfried Blériot. Vogelaar, 55, was previously reported by Dutch media to have been killed by artillery fire near Kharkiv last month; while O’Neill, 47, was said to be a humanitarian worker when it was reported he had been killed in late May.

Blériot, 32, meanwhile, had appeared in a film early in March, where he told the Argentinian publication Clarin that he was “ready to die” as he headed out from Poland. He said he had spent “a year in the French army” and cried when he talked about his two young children.

Russia wants to capture Sievierodonetsk, which had a population of 100,000 before the war, and Lysychansk, which is across the river, to complete the capture of the Luhansk oblast, one of the two Donbas regions claimed by Russia.

From there they hope to capture the Ukrainian cities of Slavyansk and Kramatorsk in the neighbouring Donetsk oblast.

Loud explosions could be heard from the centre of Slavyansk on Saturday, from Russian artillery in the distance and from answering Ukrainian fire. The city’s air raid siren went off repeatedly.

Some people were out and about on the streets of Slavyansk buying food. The city is without gas and water and has intermittent electricity. Many residents have left, but some have remained behind and another group has returned to frontline Donbas towns after fleeing and then running out of money.

A wooden Russian Orthodox church, close to the Sviatohirsk monastery, around 12 miles north of Slavyansk, was pictured burning as a result of the fighting. Ukraine’s president Volodymyr Zelenskiy said

four people were killed and four wounded following a Russian attack. Three hundred people, including 60 children, were said by Zelenskiy to be sheltering in the monastery complex.

British defence intelligence said that Russia had been able combine “airstrikes and massed artillery fire to bring its overwhelming firepower to bear” and so support “its creeping advance”.

But the British said it had come at a cost. The use of “unguided munitions has led to the widespread destruction of built-up areas in the Donbas”. Film released by Haidai, the Luhansk governor, early on Saturday showed apartment blocks damaged and on fire, while shelling was audible near by.

Haidai acknowledged that the situation for the Ukrainians in Sievierodonetsk remained difficult, but said he believed the defenders could now hold out for another fortnight. A Russian victory in that timescale was “not realistic”, he added.

After that, the governor said, he hoped that newly promised western Himars – multiple-launch rocket systems – could tip the balance in Kyiv’s favour, by allowing Ukraine to target the Russians at a greater distance than before.

“As soon as we have enough western long-range weapons, we will push their artillery away from our positions. And then, believe me, the Russian infantry, they will just run,” the governor added.

The Chechen leader, Ramzan Kadyrov, said on Friday that he had been told by Russia’s defence minister, Sergei Shoigu, that Russia would now “accelerate” the invasion. New tactics that “will make it possible to significantly increase the effectiveness of offensive manoeuvres” had been identified, Kadyrov added.

But in an overnight assessment, the Institute for the Study of War, a US thinktank closely following the conflict, said it was sceptical about the claims made. On speeding the rate of advance, the institute said it believed “Russian forces are unlikely to be able to do so”.

Russian authorities began issuing passports in Kherson and Melitopol on Friday, according to the institute. Ukraine’s military said that the Russian occupiers faced growing resistance in the southern region, which had forced Moscow to reinforce its troops there.

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| HEADLINE | 06/04 Day 101 of the Russia invasion |
| SOURCE | https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/04/russia-ukraine-war-what-we-know-on-day-101-of-the-invasion |
| GIST | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ukrainian forces have recaptured around 20% of the territory they lost in Sievierodonetsk since Russia’s invasion, according to Ukrainian officials. “Whereas before the situation was difficult, the percentage [held by Russia] was somewhere around 70%, now we have already pushed them back by approximately 20%,” Serhiy Gaidai, the head of the eastern region of Luhansk, announced on national television on Friday.• Leading US general Mark Milley met Finnish president Sauli Niinisto on Friday to pledge US support for Finland’s and Sweden’s Nato membership bids, which Turkey is blocking. Milley told reporters it was clear that, if the two countries’ applications were approved, “they will bring a significant increase in the military capability of Nato”, Agence France-Presse reported. After Helsinki, Milley was expected to visit neighbouring Sweden on Saturday.• A driver transporting two Reuters journalists in eastern Ukraine was killed and the two reporters lightly wounded on Friday, a company spokesperson said. They had come under fire while en route to Severodonetsk. “They were travelling in a vehicle provided by the Russian-backed separatists and driven by an individual assigned by the separatists,” the international news agency said.• Vladimir Putin says exporting grain from Ukraine is “no problem”, after Moscow’s invasion raised fears of a global food crisis. The Russian president said in a televised interview on Friday that exporting could be done via Ukrainian ports, via others under Russian control, or even via |

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| | <p>central Europe. Putin accused the west of “bluster” by claiming Moscow was preventing the grain exports from Ukraine.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The African Union head and Senegalese president, Macky Sall, said he was “reassured” after meeting with Putin regarding global food shortages caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. In addition to global food shortages, other issues discussed between the two leaders included grain supplies that are stuck in Ukrainian ports. • Ukraine’s ambassador to Ankara, Vasyl Bodna, accused Russia of “stealing” and sending Ukrainian grain abroad. “Russia shamelessly steals Ukrainian grain and sends it overseas from Crimea, including to Turkey,” Bodna said in a tweet on Friday. • 14 million Ukrainians have been forced to flee their homes, the majority women and children, the UN Crisis Coordinator for Ukraine, Amin Awad, said on Friday. In a statement released on the 100th day of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Awad spoke of displaced Ukrainians, describing the “scale and speed of [their] displacement not witnessed in history”. • Moscow will help restore and rebuild Luhansk and Donetsk, Moscow mayor Sergei Sobyanin announced on Friday after a visit to Luhansk. About 1,500 specialists from various departments of the Moscow municipal economy complex and 500 pieces of equipment had arrived in Luhansk, the mayor said. • European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen said that Ukraine must meet all the necessary standards and conditions for accession. She went on to call on the EU to help Ukraine achieve its goals. • “Victory shall be ours,” Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskiy said in a video featuring the same key ministers and advisers who appeared with him in a defiant broadcast on 24 February, the day his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, launched his unprovoked assault. “The armed forces of Ukraine are here. Most importantly, our people, the people of our country, are here. We have been defending Ukraine for 100 days already ... Glory to Ukraine,” Zelenskiy added. • French president Emmanuel Macron says Putin has committed a “historic and fundamental error” by invading Ukraine and is now “isolated”. “I think, and I told him, that he made a historic and fundamental error for his people, for himself and for history,” Macros said in an interview with French regional media on Friday. “Isolating oneself is one thing, but being able to get out of it is a difficult path”. Macron said he did not “rule out” a visit to Kyiv. • Switzerland’s government has rejected a request by Denmark to send nearly two-dozen Swiss-made armoured personnel carriers to Ukraine. Switzerland’s executive Federal Council confirmed the decision on Friday after Denmark requested Switzerland transfer 22 Swiss-made Piranha III wheeled armoured personnel carriers, which Denmark had obtained and stored in Germany, to Ukraine. |
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| HEADLINE | 06/05 Day 102 of the Russia invasion |
| SOURCE | https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/05/russia-ukraine-war-what-we-know-on-day-102-of-the-invasion |
| GIST | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several explosions have taken place early on Sunday in Ukraine’s capital, Kyiv, the city’s mayor, Vitali Klitschko, said. “Several explosions in Darnytskyi and Dniproviskyi districts of the capital,” Klitschko wrote on Telegram messaging app. “Services are already working on site.” There were reports of smoke in the city after the explosions. Air raid sirens had gone off earlier across much of Ukraine, including in the Kyiv region. • Ukrainian forces have been managing to push back against Russian troops in fierce fighting in Sievierodonetsk despite Moscow “throwing all its power” into capturing the key eastern city, Ukrainian officials said on Saturday. In an interview aired online, the Luhansk regional governor, Sergiy Gaiday, said the Russian army has taken control over most of Sievierodonetsk, but that Ukrainian forces were still pushing them back. • According to the Russian army, however, some Ukrainian military units have been withdrawing from Sievierodonetsk. “Some units of the Ukrainian army, having suffered critical losses during fighting for Sievierodonetsk, are pulling out towards Lysychansk”, Sievierodonetsk’s twin city, which sits just across a river, the defence ministry said in a statement. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Russian president, Vladimir Putin, has said Moscow’s anti-aircraft forces have shot down dozens of Ukrainian weapons and are “cracking them like nuts”, in an interview that aired on Saturday. According to Reuters, Russian news agency RIA, which first cited the comments, quoted Putin as responding to a question about US-supplied arms by saying Russia was coping easily and had already destroyed the weapons by the dozen. • Kyiv has rebuked the French president, Emmanuel Macron, for saying it was important not to “humiliate Russia”. The Ukrainian foreign minister, Dmytro Kuleba, tweeted in response: “Calls to avoid humiliation of Russia can only humiliate France and every other country that would call for it. Because it is Russia that humiliates itself. We all better focus on how to put Russia in its place. This will bring peace and save lives.” • Western sanctions would not have an effect on Russia’s oil exports, the Russian foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, said. Lavrov also predicted a significant increase in profits from energy shipments this year, Russian news agency Tass reported. • A EU decision to extend sanctions against Russian billionaire Andrey Melnichenko to his wife is “irrational” because she has never held Russian citizenship or resided in Russia, a representative for the couple said. The EU sanctioned Melnichenko’s wife on Friday as part of a sixth round of sanctions against Russia for waging a war against Ukraine. • The Ukrainian defence minister, Oleksiy Reznikov, said that while it was impossible to predict when the war would end, “my optimistic prognosis is that it is realistic to achieve this as early as this year”, Reuters quoted the defence ministry as saying. • Negotiations with Russia will only resume after new weapons arrive from the west and Ukraine’s position is “strengthened”, said David Arakhamia, a member of Ukraine’s negotiation group with Russia. Another negotiator, Mykhailo Podolyak, said there was no point in talks with Russia until Moscow’s forces are pushed back as far as possible towards Ukraine’s borders. • Ukraine’s intelligence services are in communication with hundreds of captured Azovstal steelworks fighters and Kyiv is doing all it can to ensure their release, according to Ukraine’s interior minister, Denys Monastyrskiy. Ukraine wants the fighters to be returned in a prisoner swap. However, some Russian officials have said forces could be tried or executed. • The US expressed support for international investigations into war crimes committed in Ukraine, the US embassy in Kyiv announced. “Those responsible for war crimes – including direct perpetrators and those who ordered them – must face justice,” the embassy tweeted on Saturday. • A famous monastery in eastern Ukraine, Svyatohirsk Lavra, caught fire after it was hit by Russian shelling. The monastery is affiliated with the Moscow Patriarchate, which is run by Putin’s ally Patriarch Kirill. There were reports that four monks were killed as a result of the attack . • The Ukrainian first lady, Olena Zelenska, and other officials commemorated 261 children killed by the Russian war against Ukraine by hanging bells near St Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv. The bells symbolise the voices of killed children, Euromaidan Press reported. |
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| HEADLINE | 06/04 Experts urge Covid precautions for summer |
| SOURCE | https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/experts-advise-keep-covid-precautions-mind-ahead-summer/2A72KSDKWVF6PDAMPCGE62FZ2A/ |
| GIST | <p>COVID-19 cases remain high in Washington state and across the country, and according to the Department of Health’s COVID dashboard, we’re also seeing a slight rise in hospitalizations.</p> <p>Ahead of summer, experts are saying it’s time to return to some key pandemic precautions with infection rates growing and immunity for all starting to wane.</p> <p>“It’s time to third dose if you only have two,” said Dr. Ali Mokdad of the University of Washington epidemiology department. “Time to get your fourth dose if you only have three. And especially if you have received that second dose or the third dose five or six months ago, your immunity right now against infection is less than 20%.”</p> |

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| | <p>Dr. Mokdad says if people are indoors or around large crowds, wearing a surgical or N-95 mask is a good option.</p> <p>“We still need to remain vigilant, this virus is not done with us,” Dr. Mokdad said. “This virus is waiting for us outside and it will find a weak among us — and by weak I mean somebody who has less immunity — either from the vaccine, or from a previous infection, and that virus will infect you.”</p> <p>According to UW Medicine hospitals, there were 40 COVID patients being treated at one point. Previously, they were around 20 to 30.</p> <p>In Pierce County, the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department says they’ve had several outbreaks at businesses and long-term health care facilities, resulting in hundreds of cases.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/04 Homelessness authority: need more funds |
| SOURCE | https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/kcrha-seeks-to-nearly-double-budget-expects-cuts-seattles-mayor-harrell-says-agency-needs-to-prioritize-needs/ |
| GIST | <p>The King County Regional Homelessness Authority is asking funding partners for about a 75% budget increase in 2023, seeking an additional roughly \$90 million to create more than 400 new available beds and 130 new “safe spaces” for RVs.</p> <p>In its first budget, for 2022, the agency received about \$119 million from the city of Seattle and King County. In its second proposed budget, the authority is asking for \$209 million.</p> <p>Regional Homelessness Authority CEO Marc Dones told reporters Thursday that the steep ask was “not aspirational,” but rather an earnest request for a step on the way to ultimately solving homelessness in the region.</p> <p>“It is about addressing, or potentially addressing I should say, some pretty significant holes in current system architecture,” Dones said, noting that the authority’s five-year plan with more long-term goals would be released in September. “It is not an ending homelessness budget.”</p> <p>In 2022, the majority of funding for the King County Regional Homelessness Authority, or KCRHA, came from the city of Seattle, which provided more than \$69 million of the current budget. This year, the city is facing an estimated \$34 million revenue shortfall, limiting the likelihood of a full increase, as Dones acknowledged Thursday.</p> <p>“We are living inside a reality where there are a number of revenue shortfalls across our funding partners. And to that end, I think that it is unreasonable to expect that everything that we put forward will be funded,” Dones said.</p> <p>At a news conference Tuesday, Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell said the city will continue to fund about 70% of KCRHA’s budget.</p> <p>But he rebuffed the authority’s “wish list” approach, calling for the agency to home in on its priorities.</p> <p>“I think, because of time, they approached the budgeting process as ‘in a perfect world, this is what I could do. This is what I want.’ And I don’t think they’ve articulated a clear expectation that they were even going to get it,” Harrell said. “And my comments to them were OK, we accept that right now. But at some point I need you to do the hard work, which is tell us exactly what you need.”</p> <p>During a meeting of the KCRHA Implementation Board last week, Dones had already shared a loosely prioritized list of the big-ticket budget requests: The highest priority items, according to Dones, are \$15.4 million in wage increases for service providers; \$5 million for up to 130 safe parking spaces for RVs; and</p> |

\$1.5 million to be granted to organizations prioritizing hiring or focusing on people with the “lived experience” in homelessness.

Second-tier items include \$20 million to build a high acuity shelter for up to 55 people in need of housing with higher levels of behavioral or other support, which went largely unfunded by the Seattle City Council last year, and \$7.2 million for the KCRHA to hire additional staff, bringing the agency closer to the original staffing model planned during its inception.

Big-ticket items at the bottom of Dones’ list include \$15 million to improve or create additional daytime spaces for people experiencing homelessness and \$20 million in emergency housing.

But, Dones said Thursday that the list is not final.

“That thinking was generated internally by staff in response to a belief that we would be asked to do that kind of tiering both by the board, and potentially by our funding partners,” Dones said. “I don’t want to go further than that at this time because I don’t have new information,” and that the city and county could possibly “come and say, here’s what revenue is going to allow us to do. And at that point, I will be able to make much better decisions.”

If the funding agencies do cut the proposed budget, Dones says they would prefer to see some new projects completely funded rather than see all of them partially funded.

“The narrative around safe parking, for example, ‘failing’ is because it has been incompletely funded in the past,” Dones said of past RV parking efforts. “So from my perspective, when we partially fund programs that are meant to serve people in this way, they actually just wind up not serving people well at all.”

“So my recommendation ... will be to say, we should fully fund things, and not funding the ones that we can’t,” Dones added.

A spokesperson for Harrell said Friday that the mayor would “consider financial support for items in KCRHA’s proposed expansion where there is both policy alignment and available funding” when drafting a proposed budget for the City Council to consider this fall, noting that it would be “weighed against the city’s other competing priorities and obligations.”

But during Tuesday’s news conference, Harrell called on the KCRHA to pare its priorities.

“This is not a negotiation — you go high, I go low — because I want to be as supportive as possible,” Harrell said. “So they gave us a high number. There was a wish list in there. They fully understand we’re going to examine that number and that we reserve to put another hat on. The hat now goes on to looking at the city’s revenues and our limitations, and then we’ll come out making decisions.”

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| HEADLINE | 06/03 Putin’s electronic warfare turns tide of war |
| SOURCE | https://www.newsweek.com/theyre-jamming-everything-putins-electronic-warfare-turns-tide-war-1712784 |
| GIST | <p>As Russian forces push for territorial gains in eastern Ukraine, they’re turning to a military capability they’ve largely forgone during the war but is expected to give them an edge: electronic warfare.</p> <p>After earlier failing to topple Ukraine’s government, Russia’s military has focused its offensive on the country’s eastern Donbas region, which is home to a large population of Russian speakers. New reporting shows Russian forces are increasingly intercepting the Ukrainian military’s communications while jamming navigation and guidance systems.</p> |

"They are jamming everything their systems can reach," an official with the [Aerorozvidka](#), a Ukrainian agency that develops unmanned aerial vehicles and other military capabilities, told the Associated Press in a report published Friday. "We can't say they dominate, but they hinder us greatly."

Russia has jammed GPS receivers on drones used by Ukrainian forces used to locate and fire artillery at enemy targets, according to the report.

Christian Brose, a former aide to Senator [John McCain](#) and author of *The Kill Chain*, recalled a story from a Ukrainian officer who said Russians killed a commander after tricking him into returning a wireless call from his mother, according to the report.

After failing to take Ukraine's capital city of Kyiv early in the conflict, Russia's redeployed forces in the eastern Donbas region [appear to be making territorial gains](#) and be poised to drive Ukrainian forces from Severodonetsk.

Donetsk Governor [Pavlo Kyrylenko](#) told *Newsweek* [last month](#) that a victory in the region is central to the propaganda campaign of Russian President [Vladimir Putin](#).

A Congressional Research Service report published in April says that "the Russian military appeared not to use many of the systems and capabilities it had amassed prior to the invasion."

"We have not seen what we believe the full scope of their electronic warfare capabilities brought to bear," a senior [Pentagon](#) official said during a March briefing.

U.S. allies earlier sounded alarms about Russia's electronic warfare capabilities. A report from an Estonian think tank concluded that Russia's technology will "pose a serious challenge to the proper planning and execution of [NATO's](#) defence of the Baltic states."

Another report by Janes defense think tank found that Ukraine has developed its electronic warfare systems following Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014.

As Russia has launched its offensive in Donbas, the think tank reported in April that the Russian military was increasing its use of electronic warfare, along with more unmanned aerial vehicles and heightened coordination of artillery with maneuver units.

Russia may have held back on its use of electronic warfare out of concerns that poorly trained technicians may not use it correctly, reported the Associated Press.

"What we're learning now is that the Russians eventually turned it off because it was interfering with their own communications so much," retired Lieutenant General Ben Hodges, a former U.S. Army commander for Europe, told the Associated Press.

Newsweek has reached out to the Russian government for comment.

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| HEADLINE | 06/04 Russia bets on 'medieval attrition approach' |
| SOURCE | https://www.newsweek.com/russia-bets-medieval-attrition-approach-ukraine-losses-mount-1712825? |
| GIST | <p>Russia is using a "medieval attrition approach" in Ukraine, as Ukrainian forces face heavy casualties, according to a former U.S. general.</p> <p>Retired Lieutenant General Ben Hodges told the Associated Press in an interview published Saturday that the losses in Ukraine would continue until the country receives additional weapons from the West.</p> |

"This battlefield is so much more lethal than what we all became accustomed to over the 20 years of Iraq and Afghanistan, where we didn't have numbers like this," Hodges, who formerly commanded U.S. Army forces in Europe, told the news outlet. "That level of attrition would include leaders, sergeants."

"They are a lot of the brunt of casualties because they are the more exposed, constantly moving around trying to do things," he added.

In recent weeks, Russia has [focused its offensive](#) on Ukraine's eastern Donbas region after being defeated north of Kyiv, the country's capital.

In an interview with [Newsmax](#) earlier this week, Ukrainian President [Volodymyr Zelensky](#) said that the "most difficult situation" in the war is "in the east of Ukraine and southern Donetsk and Luhansk."

"The situation is very difficult; we're losing 60-100 soldiers per day as killed in action and something around 500 people as wounded in action. So we are holding our defensive perimeters," he stated.

General Viktor Muzhenko, who previously served as chief of general staff of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, told the AP that the Russia-Ukraine war is "the most significant conflict in Europe since World War II."

"That explains why the losses are so great. In order to reduce losses, Ukraine now needs powerful weapons that match or even surpass Russian weaponry. This would enable Ukraine to respond in kind," Muzhenko said.

White House Announces More Military Aid for Ukraine

On Tuesday, the White House announced a new [\\$700 million package of Ukrainian military assistance](#) that includes rocket systems. The package came after Ukrainian officials had [requested long-range rockets](#) to help slow the Russian offensive in Eastern Ukraine.

In a piece he wrote in *The New York Times* this week, President [Joe Biden](#) detailed his decision to provide the weapons.

"We have moved quickly to send Ukraine a significant amount of weaponry and ammunition so it can fight on the battlefield and be in the strongest possible position at the negotiating table," the president wrote. "That's why I've decided that we will provide the Ukrainians with more advanced rocket systems and munitions that will enable them to more precisely strike key targets on the battlefield in Ukraine."

Newsweek has reached out to the Russian and Ukrainian foreign ministries for comment.

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| HEADLINE | 06/03 China, India buy cheap Russian oil |
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| SOURCE | https://www.newsweek.com/buying-cheap-russian-oil-china-india-help-putin-blunt-wests-sanctions-1712493 |
| GIST | <p>The United States and its European allies have launched a devastating campaign of sanctions against Russia over its war in Ukraine, cutting Moscow off from critical energy markets at a time when it needs capital to fuel the ongoing conflict.</p> <p>But Russian President Vladimir Putin has been thrown a lifeline from Asian economic titans China and India, which have refused to join the sanctions, but have yet to be targeted for their dealings with Moscow, and have moved to buy more Russian oil than ever before.</p> <p>The premise is simple: China and India buy what the European Union has largely banned, and at a lower rate. Just how much the two powers, themselves rivals in the region, are willing and able to offer, however, remains the subject of debate among experts.</p> <p>Daniel Fried, a former U.S. ambassador to Poland who also served as coordinator for former President Barack Obama's sanctions program against Russia in the wake of the first outbreak of hostilities in</p> |

Ukraine eight years ago, told Newsweek that, when it comes to Moscow's sanctions workarounds, it is "absolutely right to focus on China and India with respect to oil."

"And one of the big questions I have and some of my colleagues have is whether the U.S. or EU is going to act to try to complicate Russia's ability to divert its oil from Europe to China and India," he added.

Fried, who is currently a distinguished fellow at the Atlantic Council think tank in Washington, said that these sales would come "presumably with a discount," but "the price of oil is so high" that without secondary sanctions targeting third-party importers, "the Russians will make bucket loads of money."

"The immediate question is what arrangements are going to be made for oil purchases and what additional restrictions can the EU and the U.S. put on," he added. "Russia will lose substantial amounts of income unless China and India make up for the shortfall, which they will not do entirely."

As to whether this shortfall might convince Putin to change his calculus on the conflict, Fried said that "sanctions are not entirely about changing behavior," but also "to weaken the adversary."

The Biden administration spoke publicly to this goal.

"We want to see Russia weakened to the degree that it can't do the kinds of things that it has done in invading Ukraine," U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin told reporters last month.

And while Fried said the objective was to convey a message to the Kremlin to "get the best deal you can rather than crowing about how you're going to make the Ukrainians fall to their knees and surrender," the concern in Moscow was that Washington and its allies saw sapping their rival's strength as a prevailing geopolitical aim, making the need to offset some of the most important losses, namely in the all-important energy sector, all the more urgent.

On Thursday, Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolay Patrushev told the newspaper Rossiyskaya Gazeta that in the course of his duties, "special emphasis is placed on the development of measures aimed at stalling Western attempts to provoke a full-scale economic crisis in Russia with a potential to exacerbate the social situation in the country."

Putin spoke further to this aim when addressing Patrushev and the Security Council the following day.

"The situation in the world remains complex and hardly predictable, and there persist old and appear new challenges and risks," the Russian leader said. "In these conditions, it is necessary more actively to look for and introduce approaches that meet realities of the time and contribute to strengthening security and stability of our state and its consistent and progressive development."

While Putin has doubled down on his vow to resist Western pressure, the long-term effects of the restrictions on the Russian economy remain unclear.

"There are no indications that Western sanctions have forced Russia to back off in Ukraine so far," Artyom Lukin, deputy director for research at Far Eastern Federal University's School of Regional and International Studies in Vladivostok, told Newsweek. "However, it takes a while for sanctions to take full effect. No one can confidently predict what impact the sanctions will ultimately have on Russia's economy and society."

"And, for that matter," he added, "how outlawing one of the major global natural resource providers is going to affect the rest of the world."

One potential outcome is a lasting realignment of global energy trade in which Russia's massive oil market focuses primarily on China. But whether "China could absorb the oil and gas that Russia currently supplies to Europe," Lukin said, remains "the most significant question."

"If Russia doesn't find the way to re-orient its oil and gas flows to the east, it would deprive Moscow of roughly half of its export revenues in three to five years from now," he said. "To redirect the oil and gas flows to Asia — and China, of course, is the biggest Asian market — infrastructure, such as pipelines and port terminals, need to be put in place."

As Lukin points out, those changes would need to be put in place relatively soon, as those types of projects take many years to complete. One particular endeavor he highlighted was the planned "Power of Siberia-2" pipeline that would supplement the original route opened in 2019 to bring more Russian gas to China.

"If it is not signed by the year's end," Lukin said, "that would be a bad sign for Moscow."

So far, he said China has displayed a mixed record on expanding economic ties with Russia since the war in Ukraine broke out nearly 100 days ago. As Beijing seeks to portray itself as neutral in the political sphere, the People's Republic has adopted a relative middle ground when it comes to overall trade.

"On the one hand, China has denounced Western sanctions against Russia," Lukin said. "On the other hand, China has de facto complied with some of the sanctions the U.S. and the EU have imposed on Moscow."

"Beijing is fearful that running afoul of the sanctions would cost it dearly in terms of access to the U.S.-dominated global financial system and Western technology," he added.

So while larger Chinese companies play a cautious hand, Lukin predicted a trend in which "smaller Chinese businesses, those with less or zero international exposure, will be increasingly important in serving as conduits for Sino-Russian trade."

India, for its part, may have less to offer than China, but the country is also viewed as more critical to Biden's broader goals, one of them being the "Indo-Pacific" framework that is largely rooted in a bid to offset Beijing's influence in the region.

Brahma Chellaney, a professor at the Centre for Policy Research in New Delhi, said India's role in the overarching U.S. strategy allowed Washington to overlook close ties between New Delhi and Moscow, including defense purchases that included the Russian S-400 surface-to-air missile system.

"Despite U.S. policy compelling Russia to pivot to China, Moscow is helping India to shore up its defenses against China at a time when Himalayan military standoffs have raised the specter of war," Chellaney told Newsweek. "The supply of the S-400 system is one such example of Russia aiding India's deterrent strategy against China. This also explains why Washington is willing to look the other way over the S-400 supply."

This view was echoed by Gaurav Arya, a retired Indian Army major who now serves as editor-in-chief of the Chanakya Forum in New Delhi. He said India's importance was reinforced by its place in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue with the U.S., Australia and Japan.

"The Quad needs India to counter China, and for its own geostrategic reasons, with a little push from history, India is willing to counter China militarily," Arya told Newsweek.

"The U.S. understands India's position and feels that India needs to be gently weaned away from Russian military equipment over a period," he added. "At the same time, the U.S. realizes that India is pushing back China, militarily, diplomatically and economically. In the entire scheme of things, S-400 is a small blip."

While Russian weapons have long served as the backbone of India's military infrastructure, a dynamic dating back to the Cold War, energy imports have been minimal, at least up until the outbreak of the conflict in Ukraine. Since then, these imports have risen dramatically, and the country's surplus refining capacity means it can serve as a hub to sell the end product back to the West.

"India's quest for new sources of crude oil is not just about diversification and refinery economics but also to a large extent, a supply chain resilience issue," Arya said. "Russian crude oil may not help India to benefit as a refining hub, but makes economic and geostrategic sense to India's planners."

Like China, India has been careful to balance its growing major power relations with a sense of independence in its foreign policy track.

Nandan Unnikrishnan, a distinguished fellow at the Observer Research Foundation in New Delhi, told Newsweek that "Russia's actions against Ukraine undoubtedly have complicated the geopolitical scenario for India, but New Delhi is not going to forgo opportunities that help deal with the developmental challenges that India faces, given that India's principal challenges are primarily domestic."

Though, he said this has led to "an uptick in acquisition of Russian energy," he noted that "this still isn't anywhere close to what the West continues to buy from Russia even today."

The EU's oil ban has restricted imports of Russian oil by ships but has allowed pipelines to keep flowing to countries like Hungary, a NATO nation that relies heavily on Russian oil, and whose leader, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, has enjoyed a close relationship with Putin.

Meanwhile, Unnikrishnan said that "India has refineries both in the private and government sector that are capable of refining Russian oil," and sanctions have yet to impede their sale abroad.

"So far, I haven't heard of difficulties faced in terms of selling these refined products," he added. "There could be hurdles that may crop up in the future, and the Indian refining industry will have to decide how to deal with these barriers if and when they arise."

Even as China and India appear diplomatically coy in embracing Russian energy in the midst of the Ukraine conflict, their trade figures prove otherwise.

Danil Bochkov, an expert at the Russian International Affairs Council in Moscow, pointed to record trade numbers with both countries.

"Russia-China bilateral trade has demonstrated a record spike in May for the first four-month of the year due to the rise in energy prices, China's increased demand for Russian energy goods, as well as Beijing's desire to store some extra volumes amid hefty discounts for Russian oil and gas," Bochkov told Newsweek. "Similar dynamics are equally applied to India."

Bochkov argues that in the end, economics will determine outcomes.

"Here, economics trumps politics," he said, "since both Beijing and Delhi shun Western sanctions by avoiding direct purchases from Russia and turning to alternative channels such as reloading at sea and blending different crudes to dilute Russian oil origins."

China and India have also both explored doing business with Russia based on their respective natural currencies, rather than the U.S. dollar. Bochkov noted that ruble-yuan exchanges increased some 12 times between February and May of this year.

"So, even though neither India nor Beijing has directly sided with Russia politically," Bochkov said, "economically, they turn the current circumstances to their own advantage which also helps Russia to continue earning revenues from energy exports amid EU extending embargoes."

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HEADLINE 06/03 Contagious subvariants spread fast Florida

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| SOURCE | https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/overlapping-highly-contagious-covid-subvariants-are-spreading-fast-in-florida/ar-AAY3vh6 |
| GIST | <p>Overlapping waves of omicron are sweeping through the state, leading more people to get infected with COVID.</p> <p>The more transmissible BA.2.12.1 omicron subvariant became officially dominant in the U.S. last week, yet it already is being pushed out nationally by newcomers BA.4 and BA.5, both of which have arrived in Florida.</p> <p>While BA.2.12.1 has gained an advantage by being more contagious than the omicron subvariant BA.2 before it, the newcomers (4 and 5) are particularly good at evading antibodies and infecting those who are vaccinated or previously infected.</p> <p>Some epidemiologists are describing what's happening as the "battle of omicron."</p> <p>Helix, a private lab that identifies COVID strains circulating in states, found BA.4 and BA.5 crept into Florida in May, and represent about 5% of samples. The majority of cases in Florida — about 58% — are still BA.2.12.1.</p> <p>The omicron subvariant BA.4 was first identified in January in cases sequenced in South Africa, and BA.5 surfaced a month later. The omicron strain, BA.2.12.1, accounted for nearly all of South Africa's daily cases at the end of February. By the end of April, however, BA.4 and BA.5 were found in 90% of all positive test samples analyzed in that nation, exemplifying the infectiousness of the newcomers.</p> <p>Health officials say evidence seems to point to increasingly rapid, overlapping waves of new variants, which likely means more infections in Florida in the summer months ahead.</p> <p>"My theory is we may see more variants, and they may be more contagious, but they will continue to get less problematic with fewer harmful outcomes," said Dr. Mona Amin with Pediatric Associates in Fort Lauderdale.</p> <p>In Florida, much like other states, COVID reporting has become spotty with many learning of the diagnosis through at-home tests. So far, wastewater has proven useful in learning the prevalence of the virus.</p> <p>An analysis of wastewater in South Florida counties by Biobot Analytics, shows COVID cases are rising to levels last seen during the winter omicron wave in early 2022. Delta no longer is a factor in the state, Biobot's analysis shows. The samples taken in Miami-Dade and Palm Beach counties show omicron and its subvariants are circulating at increasingly high levels.</p> <p>With a seven-day daily average of more than 10,200 cases on Friday, Florida is a state classified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as having a "high level" of transmission. Broward and Miami-Dade counties are reporting a test positivity rate of more than 20%. Palm Beach County's positivity rate is 18.9%. Health officials consider transmission levels under control when the rate is less than 5%.</p> <p>Jason Salemi, an epidemiologist at the University of South Florida, points out, "We might actually (finally) be seeing some improvement in the Northeast, but in Florida — 3 in 4 people live in a high-risk county, based on the hospitalization-based measure."</p> <p>On Friday, 2,834 people were in Florida hospitals with COVID, representing nearly 5% of all beds, according to U.S. Health and Human Services data. That's a significant increase from about 1,000 COVID patients in early April, but nowhere near the more than 17,000 people hospitalized during the delta wave in August 2021.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/03 Rewrite of National Security Strategy? |
| SOURCE | https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/putin-s-invasion-of-ukraine-forces-biden-to-rewrite-us-security-plan/ar-AAy32t1 |
| GIST | <p>(Bloomberg) -- Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine has prompted a major rewrite of the Biden administration's National Security Strategy, according to people familiar with the matter.</p> <p>Early versions of the text, which is still being finalized, show how the administration's priorities are shifting in response to Putin's war in Ukraine and the burgeoning partnership between Beijing and Moscow.</p> <p>The document's publication, originally slated for this past January, was delayed after US officials came to believe that a Russian invasion of Ukraine was likely. It is now being substantially rewritten to reflect the ways the world has changed since the war began, the people said. It's not yet clear when it will be published, and one of the people emphasized it may still undergo changes.</p> <p>The new draft emphasizes the importance of both Europe and Asia to US national security interests, a shift from an earlier version that focused more squarely on China and Asia. Rather than downplaying the importance of China, the document argues that events in Europe and Asia are intricately connected, according to the people.</p> <p>Produced by every administration since Ronald Reagan's presidency, the National Security Strategy provides one of the most important windows into the White House's thinking on foreign policy issues.</p> <p>The document, mandated by Congress, is designed to help lawmakers evaluate the administration's budget priorities for national security; to clarify US relationships with allies, partners, and adversaries; and to ensure that representatives from across the US national security apparatus speak to foreign counterparts with one voice.</p> <p>Spokespersons at the National Security Council didn't respond to a request for comment.</p> <p>Secretary of State Antony Blinken's recent speech on US policy toward China suggests one potential formulation for the way the document will weigh threats from Beijing and Moscow. Russia, Blinken said, is a "clear and present threat," whereas China is "the most serious long-term challenge to the international order."</p> <p>More fundamentally, the strategy is likely to argue that neither Russia's challenge in Europe nor China's in Asia can be dealt with in isolation.</p> <p>"For us, there is a certain level of integration and a symbiosis in the strategy we are pursuing in Europe and the strategy we're pursuing in the Indo-Pacific," National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan told reporters on May 18. "President Biden's unique capacity to actually stitch those two together is, I think, going to be a hallmark of his foreign policy presidency."</p> <p>In particular, Putin's invasion of Ukraine has brought China's ambitions toward the democratically-governed island of Taiwan into sharp focus for US policy makers. Even before the war began, Biden officials argued that China would likely view America's response to the Ukraine crisis as a proxy for how it would deal with more aggressive action by Beijing against Taiwan.</p> <p>Since the war began, American officials have viewed several developments as sending a powerful message to Beijing, including the rapid deployment of sanctions against Russia in partnership with European allies, the bolstering of European defense budgets and the willingness of NATO allies to abandon decades of more cautious policies to aid Ukraine with financial and military support.</p> <p>"The Chinese are going to watch this very, very carefully," Lieutenant General Scott Berrier, director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, said last month of Putin's war in Ukraine. "It's going to take some time for them to sort out."</p> |

Officials in President Xi Jinping's government have repeatedly rejected accusations that they seek to attack Taiwan, which China views as part of its territory despite never controlling it. At the same time, Xi's government has warned that the US is taking a "Cold War" approach toward Asia. Beijing has sought to counter that by [bolstering ties](#) with Pacific Island nations while reiterating its claims to disputed areas of the South China Sea.

The Biden administration's focus on the interconnected nature of Europe and Asia has also been driven by a growing recognition of the partnership between Beijing and Moscow, as well as the willingness of Asian countries such as Japan and South Korea to sanction Moscow over the invasion, the people said.

The result has been a burgeoning US dialog with Asian nations about events in Europe and with European countries about events in Asia, officials say. Whereas discussions with European nations about the Indo-Pacific during the Obama administration were "difficult, challenging, often suspicious," they are now "deeply productive," White House Indo-Pacific Coordinator Kurt Campbell [told](#) the Center for Strategic and International Studies on May 9.

The revised security document is also expected to feature a clearer articulation of the link between emerging transnational threats such as climate change and traditional geopolitical competition, one of the people said. Outer-space, for example, is both a transnational issue as well as a venue where geopolitics plays out, the person said.

The Trump administration published its National Security Strategy, which [focused](#) on "American sovereignty," in December 2017. The Biden administration [published](#) its "Interim National Security Strategic Guidance" in March 2021, but is yet to publish its full-fledged National Security Strategy.

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| HEADLINE | 06/03 Economy already losing steam? |
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| SOURCE | https://www.cnn.com/2022/06/03/investing/premarket-stocks-trading/index.html |
| GIST | <p>LondonCNN Business — Fears about whether America could fall into a recession are dominating conversations among investors and pose a risk to the Biden administration ahead of midterm elections this fall.</p> <p>In the meantime, the US economy is humming along — though there are signs it is sliding into a lower gear.</p> <p>That poses new challenges for companies and workers. But it could help the Federal Reserve in the medium-term, as it tries to roll back pandemic-era support for the economy and get inflation under control without generating a shock.</p> <p>Here are three indicators that America's economic engine is cooling compared to the frenzied period after coronavirus lockdowns were lifted.</p> <p>1. The job market: The US jobs report for May showed Friday that 390,000 positions were added last month. That's a solid number, and higher than expected, but down from 428,000 in April.</p> <p>For much of the past year, roughly 450,000 to 650,000 jobs have been added each month.</p> <p>2. The housing market: Borrowing costs have jumped as a result of the Fed's decision to start hiking interest rates. A 30-year fixed-rate mortgage averaged 5.09% for the week ending June 2, up from 2.99% the same time last year.</p> <p>That's driving some prospective homebuyers out of the market, helping to ease red-hot demand. Sales of existing homes in the United States fell for the third consecutive month in April.</p> |

3. The Beige Book: The Fed's [latest survey of economic conditions](#) released this week, known as the "Beige Book," showed that all 12 districts across the country experienced growth, but the impact of tighter financial conditions was starting to become apparent.

"Retail contacts noted some softening as consumers faced higher prices, and residential real estate contacts observed weakness as buyers faced high prices and rising interest rates," the report said.

Eight districts reported that "expectations of future growth among their contacts had diminished," while contacts in three districts "specifically expressed concerns about a recession."

And yet, the data is messy. Economists at Citigroup think a pullback in hiring may not be a tangible signal the economy is really settling back into a more normal pace, for example.

"While this slowing could be a welcome sign for the Fed that demand for workers is easing, in the near term we would expect that a softer pace of job growth would more likely reflect limitations caused by short supply of workers," they said in a research note published this week. There were [11.4 million job openings](#) in the United States in April.

Plus, while home sales have pulled back, prices continue to climb. The median price of a home in April was a record \$391,200, rising 14.8% from a year ago, according to a report from the National Association of Realtors.

That means that it's ultimately too soon to say whether the Federal Reserve's plan to engineer a "soft landing" for the economy is working, and that investors would be wise to continue to proceed with caution.

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| HEADLINE | 06/04 Worker shortage hits summer camps |
| SOURCE | https://www.cnn.com/2022/06/04/economy/summer-camps-staffing-shortage/index.html |
| GIST | <p>New YorkCNNBusiness — Many working parents who rely on local summer camps to keep their kids busy when school's out for the summer won't have that option this year because of a serious staffing shortage.</p> <p>The start of summer vacation has arrived, but instead of preparing to welcome campers, several camps have had to disappoint families by shrinking the variety of programs they can offer this year. Some are canceling overnight programs, or worse, camp altogether for the 2022 season.</p> <p>It's a nightmare situation for families who now have to scramble for a plan B. Camp operators say a serious worker shortage has forced them to take such drastic measures.</p> <p>One of those camps is Camp Fire Camp Toccoa, located on 176 acres in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in northeast Georgia. The camp is run by a national nonprofit youth development organization.</p> <p>In early May it notified families that it would not be able to operate its overnight camp program this summer because of "difficulty in securing the necessary staff to provide a summer residence camp experience that meets the standards and expectations of the Staff and Board of Directors," according to a message on its website.</p> <p>In a more detailed entry posted on its Facebook page at the same time, the camp operators wrote they had spent hours preparing to open its overnight camp this summer.</p> <p>"At the end of the day, though, we have been unable to hire enough counselors to run the programs, and to provide the care and attention that our campers need and deserve."</p> |

“No amount of leaf blowing, painting, and fixing will put a counselor in each cabin. No amount of advertising, networking, and direct contact with individuals in search of summer staff has produced a staff large enough to run our magical overnight programs,” the post said, adding that Camp Toccoa hopes to be adequately staffed to offer overnight camps for the 2023 season.

Officials at Camp Fire Camp Toccoa couldn’t immediately be reached for comment.

Staffing shortages also have forced some city-run summer camps to cancel their entire season this year.

In Michigan, Traverse City canceled its 2022 summer day camp program because it couldn’t hire enough workers to meet state regulations that require a 10:1 students to counselor ratio.

Traverse City officials said in an April press release that applicants for camp coordinators were offered 50% more in hourly wages this year versus 2021 and camp counselors a 20% pay boost from a year ago but “still only received two applicants to date.” The city needed a staff of 10 to 12 to efficiently run the camp.

“The decision to cancel the Summer Day Camp program has been extremely difficult, especially in light of the childcare difficulties those in our community are facing,” Traverse City Manager Marty Colburn said in a statement. “Unfortunately, the staffing shortage is not unique to the City or the region, but is prevalent throughout the state and nation.”

Tim Younker, director of the Parks and Recreation Department in St. Ann, Missouri said his city also failed in attracting the staff needed to operate its six-week summer camp this year.

“We publicized camp director and counselor jobs in local high schools and colleges and on Facebook and our website but got no responses,” he said. The day camp (which costs \$250 for residents and \$350 for non-residents), runs from late June to late July and usually employs a seasonal staff of 18.

“At the end of April we let families know we wouldn’t be offering the camp this year,” said Younker. It is a blow to many parents who rely on it for their summer childcare needs, he said.

“These used to be desirable summer jobs for older kids. I don’t really know why they’re not interested,” Younker said. “It’s the same situation with swimming pools. There aren’t enough lifeguards and I’ve heard of pools around us that have had to cut back hours.”

He added that city administrators are looking to offer higher pay next year as a way to attract the staff they need.

Expect to pay more

A worker shortage couldn’t come at a worse time for the camp industry, which is still reeling from the disruptions caused the pandemic over the past two years.

In 2020, 82% of overnight camps and 60% of day camps didn’t operate at all. The loss of business forced some camps to shut down completely.

Demand has come roaring back this year with some 26 million children nationwide expected to be enrolled in one of over 15,000 summer camps in the country.

“Parents are desperate for their kids to be out in nature with their peers and away from tech devices after two years of social distancing,” said Tom Rosenberg, president and CEO of the American Camp Association, a non-profit that represents the summer camp industry.

As demand surges and inflation forces camp operators to incur more costs by having to pay more for food, bus transportation staff and insurance as well as other supplies, Rosenberg said camp fees are also estimated to jump 10% to 15% this summer over 2021.

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| HEADLINE | 06/04 Mayhem predicted for summer travel |
| SOURCE | https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/travel-chaos-flight-cancellations-2022/index.html |
| GIST | <p>(CNN) — Picture the scene. You're heading off on the vacation you've dreamed of since early 2020. Your bags are packed, you get to the airport with plenty of time -- only to find lines so long that you end up missing your longed-for flight.</p> <p>That was the situation for over 1,000 travelers at Dublin Airport last week. The situation was so chaotic that the government summoned the airport CEO to come up with a plan for the rest of the summer, and the airport has pledged to pay passengers' "out of pocket expenses" for missed flights.</p> <p>It's not just Dublin. Netherlands flag carrier KLM stopped selling tickets for four days last week, following chaos at its base, Schiphol, throughout April and May. KLM also offered existing passengers the chance to rebook, if they didn't want to deal with long lines at the airport.</p> <p>Meanwhile, UK airports including Manchester, Heathrow and Gatwick are making daily headlines for lines snaking out of buildings, missing bags and hundreds of canceled flights, particularly by British Airways, EasyJet and Tui.</p> <p>Ryanair CEO Michael O'Leary even told TV channel ITV this week that the UK should "bring in the army" to help ease the chaos.</p> <p>But it isn't just Europe -- the US is also being badly hit. Delta Air Lines canceled over 500 flights over the busy Memorial Day weekend, while American Airlines canceled over 100 on the Monday alone.</p> <p>Meanwhile Delta has vowed to cut 100 flights per day this summer in order to "minimize disruptions," while JetBlue is slashing up to 10% of its schedule, and Alaska Airlines is cutting 2%.</p> <p>Summer travel is always a challenge of course, but summer 2022 travel is on another level.</p> <p>Experts say it's a perfect storm: Suddenly we all want to travel, but airlines and airports had laid off staff during the pandemic, and are struggling to recruit replacements. Put simply: they can't handle us.</p> <p>'A sign of things to come'</p> <p>Of course, experts have been warning about this for a while now. When CNN spoke to consumer advocate Christopher Elliot in April, he predicted that the chaos that was already mushrooming across the US and UK was a "sign of things to come."</p> <p>"I hate it when I'm right," he sighs now. "This is going pretty much like I thought it would... and I think it's going to get worse." For some time, he's been advising his readers not to travel to Europe in August. "I think this is just the opening act for what will be a crazy summer," he says.</p> <p>"We still have high gas prices, we have record demand straining the entire system, we still have pilot shortages. Airlines haven't fully staffed up yet the way they needed to."</p> <p>For Rory Boland, editor of consumer magazine Which? Travel, much of it boils down to the airlines' and airports' relentless cost-cutting.</p> <p>"The main thing [causing disruption] is the staffing," he says. "So then you go to, why were so many people let go during the pandemic? The disruption isn't even across the industry. In the UK, Jet2 is having problems but not on the scale of British Airways or EasyJet. Ryanair isn't too bad, either.</p> <p>"The airlines' defence is that they weren't given enough warning about the restart of travel, and there's probably some fairness to that, but there are clearly some airlines and airports that were able to get their act together, and things are going ok, and some having a complete disaster."</p> |

Reaching adequate staffing levels will, he says, be impossible unless airlines and airports up their offering.

"We looked at the wages for check-in staff jobs being advertised at Gatwick Airport, and it was lower than working in [budget supermarket] Lidl," he says. "We saw that in Dublin, too. Airport working conditions are difficult, you're asked to work difficult hours, on-site parking is not usually free, and there's very little incentive when you're being paid less than a supermarket [would pay you.]"

British Airways are currently offering ground handler staff at Heathrow a £1,000 sign-on bonus.

The [job listing](#) states candidates must be "willing and able to work shifts covering 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year," lift weights of up to 32kg, and have the "resilience to put up with the jobs of British weather." However, the basic salary in the job description is £20,024 (\$25,143) -- below both the mean and the median average UK salaries (shift pay adds around another £5,000).

Boland, too, suspects things are going to get worse. "It's difficult to predict but what we do know is that we haven't reached the peak of travel yet, and there are no short-term solutions to staff shortages. If those two things are true, it's very hard to see what resolutions airlines can get apart from canceling more flights.

Brexit delays

For travelers to the EU from outside the bloc, there's one more problem: Brexit.

Where UK travelers used to enjoy freedom of movement in the EU, meaning they could travel wherever and whenever they wanted in the bloc, post-Brexit they're treated like other third-party arrivals. That means a more time-consuming arrival of getting their passport stamped (and, possibly, being questioned about their travel plans), both on arrival and departure. Destinations popular with UK travelers are feeling the difference.

"Queues for passport control are extending across Europe, not only for people arriving in European airports but also for people trying to fly to the UK," says travel podcaster [Lisa Francesca Nand](#).

"The process of having to stamp every British passport on the way in and out slows things down considerably."

Nand recently flew from Paris to Malaga in the south of Spain, and then from Malaga to the UK. There were no passport queues for the first flight, within the Schengen area, she says. But flying Malaga to London Gatwick, "there were queues snaking around the airport for the non-EU lane because there were 20 flights to UK airports leaving that afternoon."

Another Brit, Victoria Bryan thought she, her partner and her two children had left plenty of time by arriving for a flight back to the UK from Lisbon on June 2. They arrived at 9 a.m. for an 11.20 a.m. flight with TAP Air Portugal, and checked in their bags and made it through security without any major queues.

That's when they made the mistake of sitting down with their kids, aged 5 and 10, near the gate area. "We sat at a café rather than sitting at the gate for an hour," she says.

But exiting the Schengen area entails a final passport check, and with Portugal a huge destination for Brits, the new process meant queuing for another 30 minutes. The family arrived at the gate 10 minutes before departure, only to be told the doors had been closed. Bryan says around 30 passengers, including elderly people and kids, were in the same boat.

When CNN spoke to her, the family was standing in a two-hour line for passport control to cross back into Portugal, to pick up their bags and book a new flight at their own expense. They'd already done that same line the previous week, on arrival.

Lisbon Airport did not respond to a request for comment.

Carmageddon continues

If you haven't yet booked a rental car on arrival, you might want to rethink your trip.

Just like the "carmageddon" of last year, prices for car hire are sky high. For August, booking two months ahead, the cheapest week's rental in popular Porto that CNN could find was \$582 with a local company or \$772 with a multinational, Europcar.

One tour operator to Italy told CNN that they are unable to source any more cars for bookings in Sardinia in June. Elliott says that he's heard of people landing at LAX during peak times to find there's not a single car available for rent, whatever the price.

CNN checked for the cheapest price available for a two-day rental this weekend at various major airports. The cheapest we could find was \$150 at LAX, \$161 at Miami, \$167 at Heathrow, \$225 at Nice in southern France, and \$183 at Venice, Italy.

The situation is so dire that Christopher Elliott advises vacationing close to home, where you can drive your own car, or even take a staycation.

"If you don't have your own car, go somewhere using mass transit, and go somewhere that allows you to walk or has access to mass transit," he says. "Save the bucket list vacation for September, October or November." He has similar pivoting advice for those finding hotels and Airbnbs are booked up, advising looking for long-term business rentals. "I just paid \$1,200 for a month in a two-bedroom apartment in Athens -- I could have just stayed a week and it would have paid for itself," he says.

Panic on the high seas

Cruises were hit hard by the pandemic at the start, where mushrooming on-board case numbers made vessels look like floating petri dishes.

Now, just as people are ready to dip a toe back in the water, the cruise industry is being rocked by the same staffing issues.

"Re-staffing cruise ships is a lengthy process -- there are a number of certifications that crew members must receive," says Colleen McDaniel, editor-in-chief of Cruise Critic.

"That process takes time, and with a global employee shortage it's even more lengthy than usual." She adds that cruise lines are "battling similar supply chain issues" to those on land.

"In extreme cases, that's meant some sailings have had to be canceled if they're unable to be crewed. But in most cases, it might mean certain areas have limited hours or there are certain items unavailable during a particular sailing."

McDaniel says that travel insurance is the best mitigation -- a cruise line will refund you for a canceled cruise, but not your flight to your point of departure. And there is one silver lining when it comes to cruises, she says -- as cruise lines remove capacity limits, there are suddenly more staterooms that need to be filled and prices are looking "truly competitive."

That's not the only positive, says Rory Boland.

"If you look at the whole context, the majority of people who travel this weekend won't see their flights canceled," he says.

"You will probably encounter a long queue that won't be fun, but you won't miss your flight. Your experience probably won't be fantastic, but you will get away.

"I know people are worried their vacation won't happen, but it probably will."

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| HEADLINE | 06/03 Study: melatonin poisoning in kids rising |
| SOURCE | https://apnews.com/article/covid-science-health-poisoning-716dbfe4eb49fc4cc224d388d91e8dbf |
| GIST | <p>NEW YORK (AP) — Researchers are drawing attention to a rise in poisonings in children involving the sleep aid melatonin — including a big jump during the pandemic.</p> <p>Last year, U.S. poison control centers received more than 52,000 calls about children consuming worrisome amounts of the dietary supplement — a six-fold increase from about a decade earlier. Most such calls are about young children who accidentally got into bottles of melatonin, some of which come in the form of gummies for kids.</p> <p>Parents may think of melatonin as the equivalent of a vitamin and leave it on a nightstand, said Dr. Karima Lelak, an emergency physician at Children’s Hospital of Michigan and the lead author of the study published Thursday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. “But really it’s a medication that has the potential to cause harm, and should be put away in the medicine cabinet,” Lelak said.</p> <p>WHAT IS MELATONIN?</p> <p>Melatonin is a hormone that helps control the body’s sleep cycle. It has become a popular over-the-counter sleeping aid, with sales increasing 150% between 2016 and 2020, the authors said.</p> <p>In the U.S., melatonin is sold as a supplement, not regulated as a drug. Because melatonin is unregulated, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration doesn’t have oversight over the purity of ingredients or the accuracy of dosage claims.</p> <p>Other researchers have found that what’s on the label may not match what’s actually in the bottle, and some countries have banned the sale of over-the-counter melatonin.</p> <p>HOW ARE MELATONIN OVERDOSES TREATED?</p> <p>Many people can tolerate even relatively large doses of melatonin without significant harm, experts say. But there is no antidote for an overdose. In cases of a child accidentally ingesting melatonin, experts often ask a reliable adult to monitor them at home.</p> <p>But slowed breathing or other worrisome signs can mean a child should be taken to a hospital.</p> <p>WHAT DID THE RESEARCHERS FIND?</p> <p>Lelak and her colleagues looked at reports to poison control centers from 2012 to 2021, counting more than 260,000 calls about kids taking too much melatonin. They represented 0.6% of all poison control calls in 2012 and about 5% in 2021.</p> <p>In about 83% of those calls, the children did not show any symptoms. But other children endured vomiting, had altered breathing or showed other symptoms. Over the 10 years studied, more than 4,000 kids were hospitalized, five needed to be put on machines to help them breathe, and two — both younger than 2 — died.</p> <p>Most of the hospitalized children were teenagers, and many of those were believed to be suicide attempts.</p> <p>WHAT HAPPENED DURING THE PANDEMIC?</p> <p>Reported melatonin poisonings have been increasing for at least a decade, but the largest increases happened after the COVID-19 pandemic hit the United States in 2020. Between 2019 and 2020, the count shot up 38%.</p> <p>There may be several reasons, Lelak said. Because of lockdowns and virtual learning, more children were at home all day, meaning there were more opportunities for kids to access melatonin. Also, the pandemic caused sleep-disrupting stress and anxiety that may have caused more families to consider melatonin.</p> <p>“Children were upset about being home, teenagers were closed off from friends. And on top of all that everyone’s looking at screens for hours and hours a day,” Lelak said.</p> |

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| HEADLINE | 06/04 Intel agencies review miss Ukraine, Russia |
| SOURCE | https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-putin-afghanistan-zelenskyy-kyiv-9e1952d290e7f20f53c54ed8a832a650 |
| GIST | <p>WASHINGTON (AP) — The question was posed in a private briefing to U.S. intelligence officials weeks before Russia launched its invasion in late February: Was Ukraine’s leader, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, made in the mold of Britain’s Winston Churchill or Afghanistan’s Ashraf Ghani?</p> <p>In other words, would Zelenskyy lead a historic resistance or flee while his government collapsed?</p> <p>Ultimately, U.S. intelligence agencies underestimated Zelenskyy and Ukraine while overestimating Russia and its president, even as they accurately predicted Vladimir Putin would order an invasion.</p> <p>But Kyiv, Ukraine’s capital, did not fall in a few days, as the the United States had expected. And while American spy agencies have been credited with supporting Ukraine’s resistance, they now face bipartisan pressure to review what they got wrong beforehand — especially after their mistakes in judging Afghanistan last year.</p> <p>Intelligence officials have begun a review of how their agencies judge the will and ability of foreign governments to fight. The review is taking place while U.S. intelligence continues to have a critical role in Ukraine and as the White House ramps up weapons deliveries and support to Ukraine, trying to predict what Putin might see as escalatory and seeking to avoid a direct war with Russia.</p> <p>President Joe Biden’s administration announced it would give Ukraine a small number of high-tech, medium-range rocket systems, a weapon that Ukraine has long wanted. Since the war began on Feb. 24, the White House has approved shipping drones, anti-tank and anti-aircraft systems, and millions of rounds of ammunition. The U.S. has lifted early restrictions on intelligence-sharing to provide information that Ukraine has used to strike critical targets, including the flagship of the Russian navy.</p> <p>Lawmakers from both parties question whether the U.S. could have done more before Putin invaded and whether the White House held back some support due to pessimistic assessments of Ukraine. Sen. Angus King, an independent from Maine, told officials at a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing last month that “had we had a better handle on the prediction, we could have done more to assist the Ukrainians earlier.”</p> <p>Ohio Rep. Mike Turner, the top Republican on the House Intelligence Committee, said in an interview that he thought the White House and top administration officials had projected “their own bias on the situation in a way that lends itself to inaction.”</p> <p>The Senate Intelligence Committee sent a classified letter last month to the Office of the Director of National Intelligence asking about how intelligence agencies assessed both Ukraine and Afghanistan. CNN first reported the letter.</p> <p>Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines told lawmakers in May that the National Intelligence Council would review how the agencies assess both “will to fight” and “capacity to fight.” Both issues are “quite challenging to provide effective analysis on and we’re looking at different methodologies for doing so,” Haines said.</p> <p>While there is no announced timetable on the review, which began before the committee’s letter, officials have identified some errors. Several people familiar with prewar assessments spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive intelligence.</p> <p>Despite its vast advantages, Russia failed to establish air superiority over Ukraine and failed at basic tasks such as securing its battlefield communications. It has lost thousands of soldiers and at least eight to 10</p> |

generals, [according](#) to U.S. estimates. Russian and Ukrainian forces [are now fighting](#) in fierce, close quarters combat in eastern Ukraine, far from the swift Russian victory forecast by the U.S. and the West.

While Russia has entered recent proxy wars, it had not directly fought a major land war since the 1980s. That meant many of Russia's projected and claimed capabilities had not been put to the test, posing a challenge for analysts to assess how Russia it would perform in a major invasion, some of the people said. Russia's active weapons export industry led some people to believe Moscow would have many more missile systems and planes ready to deploy.

Russia has not used chemical or biological weapons, as the U.S. [publicly warned](#) it might. One official noted that the U.S. had "very strong concerns" about a chemical attack, but that Russia may have decided that would cause too much global opposition. Fears that Russia would use a wave of cyberattacks against Ukraine and allies have not materialized so far.

Other Russian problems were well-known, including low troop morale, a prevalence of drug and alcohol abuse among troops, and the lack of a noncommissioned officer corps to oversee forces and deliver instructions from commanders.

"We knew all of those things existed," said retired Lt. Gen. Robert Ashley, the former director of the Defense Intelligence Agency. "But it just became a cascading effect of how overwhelming all of that became when they tried to do even the most simple of operations."

Sue Gordon, the former principal deputy director of national intelligence, said analysts may have relied too much on counting Russia's inventory of military and cyber tools.

"We're going to learn a little bit about how we think about capability and use as not one and the same when you assess outcome," she said at a recent event sponsored by The Cipher Brief, an intelligence publication.

[Zelenskyy has received worldwide acclaim](#) for refusing to flee as Russia sent teams to try to capture or kill him. But before the war, there were tensions between Washington and Kyiv about the likelihood of an invasion and whether Ukraine was prepared. One flashpoint, according to people familiar with the dispute, was that the U.S. wanted Ukraine to move forces from its west to bolster defenses around Kyiv.

Until shortly before the war, Zelenskyy and top Ukrainian officials [discounted](#) warnings of an invasion, in part to tamp down public panic and protect the economy. One U.S. official said there was a belief that Zelenskyy had never been tested in a crisis of the level his country was facing.

[Lt. Gen. Scott Berrier](#), the current director of the DIA, testified in March that "my view was that, based on a variety of factors, that the Ukrainians were not as ready as I thought they should be. Therefore, I questioned their will to fight. That was a bad assessment on my part because they have fought bravely and honorably and are doing the right thing."

In May, Berrier distanced his own view from that of the entire intelligence community, which he said never had an assessment "that said the Ukrainians lacked the will to fight."

There was ample evidence of Ukraine's determination before the war. Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea and the eight-year conflict in the Donbas region had hardened public attitudes against Moscow. Ukrainian forces had received years of training and weapons shipments from the U.S. across several administrations along with help bolstering its cyber defenses.

U.S. intelligence had reviewed private polling suggested strong support in Ukraine for any resistance. In [Kharkiv](#), a mostly Russian-speaking city near the border, citizens were learning to fire guns and training for guerrilla warfare.

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| | <p>Rep. Brad Wenstrup, a member of the House Intelligence Committee, saw that determination firsthand during a December trip. Wenstrup, R-Ohio, witnessed a military ceremony where participants would read the names of every Ukrainian soldier who had died the previous day on the front lines in the Donbas, the region in eastern Ukraine where Moscow-backed separatists have been fighting Ukrainian government forces since 2014.</p> <p>“It showed to me that they had a will to fight,” he said. “This has been brewing for a long time.”</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/04 Iran admits taking oil off Greek tankers |
| SOURCE | https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/supreme-leader-acknowledges-iran-oil-greek-tankers-85177705 |
| GIST | <p>TEHRAN, Iran -- Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei acknowledged Saturday that Iran took the oil from two Greek tankers last month in helicopter-launched raids in the Persian Gulf.</p> <p>The confiscations were retaliation for Greece's role in the U.S. seizure of crude oil from an Iranian-flagged tanker the same week in the Mediterranean Sea over violating Washington’s harsh sanctions on the Islamic Republic.</p> <p>“They steal Iranian oil off the Greek coast, then our brave men who don’t fear death respond and seized the enemy’s oil tanker,” Khamenei said during an 80-minute speech on the anniversary of the death of the late founder of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. “But they use their media empire and extensive propaganda to accuse Iran of piracy.”</p> <p>“Who is the pirate? You stole our oil, we took it back from you. Taking back a stolen property is not called stealing,” he added.</p> <p>The seizures ratcheted up tensions between Iran and the West already simmering over Iran's tattered 2015 nuclear deal with world powers. Tehran has been enriching more uranium, closer to weapons-grade levels than ever before, causing concern that negotiators won’t find a way back to the accord and raising the risk of a wider war.</p> <p>Iran’s seizure of the tankers was the latest in a string of hijackings and explosions to roil a region that includes the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf through which a fifth of all traded oil passes. The incidents began after then-President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew the U.S. from the nuclear deal, which saw Tehran drastically limit its enrichment of uranium in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions.</p> <p>The U.S. Navy blamed Iran for a series of limpet mine attacks on vessels that damaged tankers in 2019, as well as for a fatal drone attack on an Israeli-linked oil tanker that killed two European crew members in 2021.</p> <p>Iranian hijackers also stormed and briefly captured a Panama-flagged asphalt tanker off the United Arab Emirates last year and briefly seized and held a Vietnamese tanker in November.</p> <p>Tehran denies carrying out the attacks but a wider shadow war between Iran and the West has played out in the region’s volatile waters. Tanker seizures have been a part of it since 2019, when Iran seized the British-flagged Stena Impero after the United Kingdom detained an Iranian oil tanker off Gibraltar. Iran released the tanker months later as London also released the Iranian vessel.</p> <p>Iran last year also seized and held a South Korean-flagged tanker for months amid a dispute over billions of dollars of frozen assets Seoul holds.</p> <p>Satellite images analyzed by the AP on Wednesday confirmed that one of the two tankers remained off the coast of the Iranian port city of Bandar Abbas. The Planet Labs PBC images from Tuesday showed the</p> |

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| | <p>Prudent Warrior between Bandar Abbas and Iran’s Qeshm Island near the strategic Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf through which a fifth of all the world’s oil traded passes.</p> <p>It remained unclear where the second ship, the Delta Poseidon, was.</p> <p>Talks in Vienna on the nuclear deal have been stalled since April. Since the deal’s collapse, Iran has run advanced centrifuges and has a rapidly growing stockpile of enriched uranium. Nonproliferation experts warn Iran has enriched enough up to 60% purity — a short technical step from weapons-grade levels of 90% — to make one nuclear weapon if it chooses.</p> <p>Iran insists its program is for peaceful purposes, though United Nations experts and Western intelligence agencies say Iran had an organized military nuclear program through 2003.</p> <p>Khamenei, who has final say on all state matters, in his speech Saturday also accused the U.S. of supporting recent protests in Iran sparked by price hikes and the slashing of subsidies by the government. Teachers for weeks also demonstrated in favor of better pay and working conditions.</p> <p>The value of the Iranian currency, the rial, has been weakening for years but recently tumbled to new lows, reflecting growing anxiety over Iran’s economy,</p> <p>Khamenei criticized what he called the decades-long U.S. opposition to the nation and said Washington pins its hopes to such protests. Khamenei, 82, said Iran's enemies try to pit Iranian citizens “against the Islamic system” through psychological warfare, the internet and financial support.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/03 Hawaii volcano center centuries-old battle |
| SOURCE | https://abcnews.go.com/US/sacred-hawaiian-volcano-center-centuries-battle-native-lands/story?id=85005745 |
| GIST | <p>Sacred chants recited by elders, like Native Hawaiian cultural practitioner Noe Noe Wong-Wilson, reflect indigenous beliefs and worldviews that go back a millennium.</p> <p>“In our culture, the elements have names and we consider them gods and goddesses, like the rain, wind and snow,” she told ABC affiliate KITV-4’s Lei U’i Kaholokula in the “Soul of the Nation” special “Together As One.”</p> <p>“Maunakea is one of our most precious and special places, and it cannot be duplicated,” she explained.</p> <p>Over the past several decades, Maunakea, a dormant volcano on the Island of Hawai’i, has been at the center of a simmering battle between Native Hawaiian activists like Wong-Wilson, who want the mountain protected for spiritual, cultural and ecological reasons, and research universities who see it as a scientifically optimal place to build world-class telescopes.</p> <p>When groundbreaking began in 2014 for a fourteenth telescope, known as the Thirty Meter Telescope, Native demonstrators blocked the roads in a series of protests that happened intermittently for five years. During an explosive and emotional protest in 2019, Wong-Wilson was one of 38 native elders who were arrested.</p> <p>While the controversy over Maunakea represents a textbook case of an indigenous community resisting development on sacred land, it has evolved over the past year into a story about the importance of open communication and inclusion.</p> <p>This May, the Hawaii Legislature passed House Bill 2024 CD1, which community members like Wong-Wilson are calling a welcomed change; if it passes into law, Native Hawaiian community leaders like her will have input into how the land is managed.</p> |

“It's a huge step because it's the first time that, legally, Hawaiians will actually have a seat at the table,” said Wong-Wilson.

The bill establishes an 11-member board called the Mauna Kea Stewardship and Oversight Authority that will oversee the management and human activity of the project on Maunakea. The board will include Native Hawaiians, educators and the mayor of Hawaii County, among others, according to the bill. It is currently under review by the governor, who has until July 12th to approve or veto the bill.

While HB 2024 CD1 has its critics, community members like Wong-Wilson say the bill and the Mauna Kea Working Group, which provided recommendations that led to the bill, represent a new model in how indigenous and science communities can work together going forward.

“We have to learn to talk to each other, one-on-one and get to know each other,” said Wong-Wilson, who credits the working group with helping lawmakers and scientists better understand the Native perspective on the sacred land.

“If the governor signs it into law, it would be a big accomplishment to bring this mutual stewardship paradigm shift into being,” said Rich Matsuda, associate director of external relations at the W.M. Keck Observatory, who also participated in the working group. “If it works,” he continued, “I think it serves as a model for all kinds of other indigenous spaces.”

If passed, the bill would end University of Hawaii’s stewardship of the mountain; the University said in a statement, “CD1 does address our highest priorities and supports our vision for Maunakea,” but noted “technical and operational concerns and questions with the final language” which they do not believe are a basis to request a veto of the bill.

Hawaii’s Department of Land and Natural Resources called the bill “well-intentioned” but voiced concern in a statement saying the bill “opens Mauna Kea to further development and commercial use without the regulatory oversight.”

Still, community members like Wong-Wilson see the bill as progress towards mutual stewardship that honors the cultural significance of the land. “Now we shift from just fighting the powers that be, and protesting,” said Wong-Wilson, “to moving forward and actually being proactive in how the Mauna should be managed.”

An Innovative Working Group

During the pandemic, the Mauna Kea Working Group, made up of 15 people of different perspectives, from educators to state legislators, had weekly virtual meetings with the goal of coming up with recommendations on how to manage the mountain.

“There was a lot of effort put into just getting to know each other, so we could tackle the hard discussion,” explained Wong-Wilson. The cultural practitioner and Hawai’i Island resident said she participated to exercise Hawaiian self-determination and to ensure Hawaiian philosophy and relationship toward the ‘aina, or land, was central to the discussion.

On the other side of the table were individuals from the science community such as Matsuda, an operations and electronics engineer and Mauna Kea telescope veteran of 28 years. “I was nervous; I didn't know what would come of it, but it's been transformative for me,” he said of the experience.

Matsuda, who grew up in O’ahu, is a third generation Japanese-American whose great-grandparents came to Hawai’i in the 1800s to work in the sugarcane plantations. Although he learned about the impact of colonization on Native Hawaiians in school, he said it wasn’t until the working group that he better understood the Native community’s experience of marginalization and the hurt feelings that built up over years as a result of being dismissed.

“I felt it in my heart and in my gut in a way that I had not...understood it intellectually before,” said Matsuda, explaining the impact the discussions had on him personally.

While he used to see Maunakea simply as a place for astronomy work, he says he now views the mountain as “a living ecosystem” with deep cultural significance that should be respected by all parties.

“What I’m standing up for is trying to build bridges,” continued Matsuda, who explained science and indigenous cultures don’t have to be at odds. “Once we build on this idea of mutual stewardship and mutual decision-making... that dichotomy between culture and science goes away.”

A History of Struggle and Resistance

For Native Hawaiian activists such as Wong-Wilson, the controversy over Maunakea has been personal because it represents a centuries-long lack of regard for Native rights and wishes. Long before Hawai’i became part of the United States, it was an internationally recognized sovereign nation governed by generations of Native Hawaiian royalty.

No place is more emblematic of that than Iolani Palace, a piece of living history and a preserved historic landmark dedicated to keeping the legacy of the Hawaiian monarchy alive.

“Our monarchs did remarkable things and this [Palace] reminds us of who we are as a people, and who we were as a kingdom,” said Paula Akana, executive director of The Friends of Iolani Palace, on a recent tour with KITV-4’s Lei U’i Kaholokula.

But all of that changed in 1893 when elite businessmen backed by the U.S. military overthrew the last sovereign monarch, Queen Lili‘uokalani.

The queen’s supporters fought and tried to restore her place to the throne, but failed. She was later placed under house arrest for nearly eight and a half months and charged with treason.

In 1898, the U.S. government annexed Hawai’i despite the fact that tens of thousands of Hawaiian citizens signed the “Kū‘ē” Petition Against Annexation the year prior. A legislative joint resolution, known as the “Newlands Resolution” was employed allowing the land owned by the Hawaiian monarchy to be transferred, and a new government to be installed. To this day, many scholars and Native Hawaiians say the annexation was illegal.

In 1959, Hawai’i became the 50th state. Decades later, in 1993, the U.S. government passed a resolution officially acknowledging that it had invaded Hawaii, overthrown the government of Queen Lili‘uokalani and in the process suppressed the sovereignty of the Hawaiian people.

Despite this history and a legacy that has often left Native Hawaiians marginalized, Akana says places like Iolani Palace stand as a testament to Hawaiian strength and resiliency.

“I really believe this palace shows the greatness of our people; we continue to thrive, the language is back strong, the music, the culture, the voyaging... we don’t give up,” said Akana. “And so, what may have been seen as the end, perhaps is now the beginning.”

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| HEADLINE | 06/03 Russia ‘tactical success’ in Donbas region |
| SOURCE | https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/jun/3/russia-achieving-tactical-success-donbas-after-fai/ |
| GIST | Russia is now achieving some “tactical success” on the battlefield in Ukraine’s Donbas region after failing to meet its initial objectives to seize Kyiv and the country’s government centers since the invasion 100 days ago, British officials said. |

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| | <p>On Friday, the British defense intelligence agency said Russian forces have been able to maintain momentum and currently appear to hold the initiative over Ukrainian opposition in the disputed Donbas region. Russia now controls over 90% of Luhansk Oblast and is likely to complete control in the next two weeks, U.K. officials said on Twitter.</p> <p>“Russia has achieved these recent tactical successes at significant resource cost, and by concentrating force and fires on a single part of the overall campaign,” British officials said. “Russia has not been able to generate maneuver or movement on other fronts or axes, all of which have transitioned to the defensive.”</p> <p>Russia’s failure to secure the critical Hostomel airfield in the first 24 hours of the invasion led to their initial offensive operations being stalled and pushed back by Ukrainian forces. Moscow was forced to focus on the Donbas region after its earlier failures on the battlefield, U.K. officials said.</p> <p>“Measured against Russia’s original plan, none of the strategic objectives have been achieved,” British officials said. “For Russia to achieve any form of success will require continued huge investment of manpower and equipment, and is likely to take considerable further time.”</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/03 Putin fires top Russian generals; reshuffles |
| SOURCE | https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/jun/3/putin-fires-top-russian-generals-amid-difficult-ca/ |
| GIST | <p>Russian President Vladimir Putin sacked five generals and one police colonel this week in what is believed to be a reshuffling in the top ranks of Russia’s armed forces as the country continues to experience unexpectedly heavy losses amid slow progress in its 100-day invasion of Ukraine.</p> <p>According to the Russian newspaper Pravda, Mr. Putin fired Maj. Gens. Vasily Kukushkin, Alexander Laas, Andrew Lipilin, Alexander Udovenko and Yuri Instrankin. He also sacked police Col. Emil Musin. The newspaper cited a source close to Russia’s Ministry of Internal Affairs in confirming the report.</p> <p>Russia has sustained major battlefield losses among its top military leaders in Ukraine since the invasion that began in February. At least a dozen generals are believed to have been killed in the fighting so far.</p> <p>British intelligence officials said Russia also has likely suffered “devastating losses” among its mid- and junior-ranking officers in the conflict. Russian lieutenants and captains have been forced to lead the lowest level tactical actions as their army lacks the “highly trained and empowered” cadre of noncommissioned officers who fulfill that role in Western forces, officials said.</p> <p>“With multiple credible reports of localized mutinies amongst Russia’s forces in Ukraine, a lack of experienced and credible platoon and company commanders is likely to result in a further decrease in morale and continued poor discipline,” British defense intelligence officials said in a Twitter post.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/04 How long can Ukraine keep up the fight? |
| SOURCE | https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/jun/4/as-ukraine-loses-troops-how-long-can-it-keep-up-th/ |
| GIST | <p>ZHYTOMYR, Ukraine — As soon as they had finished burying a veteran colonel killed by Russian shelling, the cemetery workers readied the next hole. Inevitably, given how quickly death is felling Ukrainian troops on the front lines, the empty grave won’t stay that way for long.</p> <p>Col. Oleksandr Makhachek left behind a widow, Elena, and their daughters Olena and Myroslava-Oleksandra. In the first 100 days of war, his grave was the 40th dug in the military cemetery in Zhytomyr, 90 miles (140 kilometers) west of the capital, Kyiv.</p> <p>He was killed May 30 in the Luhansk region of eastern Ukraine where the fighting is raging. Nearby, the burial notice on the also freshly dug grave of Viacheslav Dvornitskyi says he died May 27. Other graves also showed soldiers killed within days of each other - on May 10, 9th, 7th and 5th. And this is just one cemetery, in just one of Ukraine’s cities, towns and villages laying soldiers to rest.</p> |

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said this week that Ukraine is now losing 60 to 100 soldiers each day in combat. By way of comparison, just short of 50 American soldiers died per day on average in 1968 during the Vietnam War's deadliest year for U.S. forces.

Among the comrades-in-arms who paid respects to the 49-year-old Makhachek at his funeral on Friday was Gen. Viktor Muzhenko, the Ukrainian Armed Forces' chief of general staff until 2019. He warned that losses could worsen.

"This is one of the critical moments in the war, but it is not the peak," Muzhenko told The Associated Press. "This is the most significant conflict in Europe since World War II. That explains why the losses are so great. In order to reduce losses, Ukraine now needs powerful weapons that match or even surpass Russian weaponry. This would enable Ukraine to respond in kind."

Concentrations of Russian artillery are causing many of the casualties in the eastern regions that Moscow has focused on since its initial invasion launched Feb. 24 failed to take Kyiv.

Retired Lt. Gen. Ben Hodges, the former commanding general of U.S. Army forces in Europe, described the Russian strategy as a "medieval attrition approach" and said that until Ukraine gets promised deliveries of U.S., British and other weapons to destroy and disrupt Russian batteries, "these kinds of casualties are going to continue."

"This battlefield is so much more lethal than what we all became accustomed to over the 20 years of Iraq and Afghanistan, where we didn't have numbers like this," he said in an AP phone interview.

"That level of attrition would include leaders, sergeants," he added. "They are a lot of the brunt of casualties because they are the more exposed, constantly moving around trying to do things."

Makhachek, a military engineer, led a detachment that laid minefields and other defenses, said Col. Ruslan Shutov, who attended the funeral of his friend of more than 30 years.

"Once the shelling began, he and a group hid in a shelter. There were four people in his group, and he told them to hide in the dugout. He hid in another. Unfortunately, an artillery shell hit the dugout where he was hiding."

Ukraine had about 250,000 men and women in uniform before the war and was in the process of adding another 100,000. The government hasn't said how many have died in more than 14 weeks of fighting.

Nobody really knows the number of Ukrainian civilians who have been killed or how many combatants have died on either side. Claims of casualties by government officials - who may sometimes exaggerate or lowball their figures for public relations reasons - are all but impossible to verify.

Western analysts estimate far higher Russian military casualties, in the many thousands. Still, as Ukraine's losses mount, the grim mathematics of war require that it find replacements. With a population of 43 million, it has manpower.

"The problem is recruiting, training and getting them on the front line," said retired U.S. Marine Col. Mark Cancian, a senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

"If the war is now moving into a long-term attrition struggle, then you have to build systems to get replacements," he said. "This has been a difficult moment for every army in combat."

Muzhenko, the Ukrainian general, said Zelenskyy's admission of high casualties would further galvanize Ukrainian morale and that more Western weaponry would help turn the tide.

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| | “The more Ukrainians know about what is happening at the front, the more the will to resist will grow,” he said. “Yes, the losses are significant. But with the help of our allies, we can minimize and reduce them and move on to successful offensives. This will require powerful weapons.” |
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| HEADLINE | 06/03 Japan’s largest natural population decline |
| SOURCE | https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/06/03/japan-low-births-population-decline-2021/ |
| GIST | <p>In 2021, Japan recorded its lowest number of births in more than a century, according to government data released Friday. The figure is sure to stoke anxieties over the ongoing implications of population decline — a longtime subject of hand-wringing in the country’s policy circles and political discourse.</p> <p>The country recorded 811,604 births and 1,439,809 deaths last year — meaning the population dropped by 628,205, the biggest natural decline since data became available, Reuters reported. The decline in births marks a 3.5 percent decrease from the previous year.</p> <p>The fertility rate — the average number of children a woman has in her lifetime — decreased for the sixth year in a row, to 1.3. The rate is the fourth lowest on record, according to the Japanese news agency Jiji Press.</p> <p>That’s compared with a rate of 2.4 worldwide in 2020, the latest year for which the World Bank has published global data. More than a dozen countries, including Ukraine and Italy, reported lower fertility rates than Japan that year. Niger stood at the other end of the spectrum, with a fertility rate of 6.7 in 2020.</p> <p>An official with the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare told Jiji Press that the decline in the fertility rate last year was the result of decreases in the number of women of childbearing age as well as the fertility rate of women in their 20s.</p> <p>The data is bad news for those in Japan who worry about the societal effects of the country’s aging and shrinking population. Nearly 30 percent of the population is over 65 years old. The decline in the working-age population has contributed to a labor shortage, which the coronavirus pandemic exacerbated, and raised concerns about a worse labor crunch to come.</p> <p>Experts attribute falling birthrates to a constellation of factors.</p> <p>“It’s not about sexlessness,” said Jennifer Robertson, professor emerita of anthropology and art history at the University of Michigan. “It’s all of the infrastructure that goes into the healthy maintenance of a multigenerational household.”</p> <p>Men struggle to get good jobs, prompting them to forgo marriage — and people in Japan rarely have children outside of marriage. The number of marriages fell for the second year in a row in 2021, to 501,116, according to the Asahi Shimbun, a leading Japanese newspaper.</p> <p>Meanwhile, the proportion of women receiving higher education has risen in the past half-century, as has their employment rate. Affordable day care is hard to come by, Robertson said. And in a society where women are still expected to take on significantly more domestic labor than male partners, many women are opting out of motherhood to focus on their careers, instead.</p> <p>“The state is very conservative and wants to maintain the heteronormativity of marriage and this pink-and-blue, binary system of the sexual and gendered division of labor,” Robertson said. “Until that changes, they’re going to be suffering from the huge expense of maintaining an elderly population.”</p> <p>Tokyo recorded the lowest fertility rate, at 1.08, Asahi reported. The latest countrywide figure falls below the government’s target rate of 1.8. And the tally of deaths in 2021 is the country’s highest since World War II, according to Asahi, with cancer as the leading cause.</p> |

But Japan is not the only East Asian country to see a decline in fertility. China released [census results](#) last year that showed the country's population is continuing to grow, albeit only slightly. But the country's 2020 fertility rate, 1.3 children per woman, was below Japan's that year.

Births in China fell to a [record low in 2021](#), part of a downward trend that has prompted authorities in Beijing to allow women to have more children and offer families cash subsidies. Hospitals, meanwhile, are [turning away men seeking vasectomies](#).

In 2020, fertility rates in Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan were below Japan's, [attributable in part to a trend](#) in wealthy East Asian countries of people delaying marriage and rarely having children out of wedlock.

Schooling is also pricey in these countries. It is also difficult for young people across the region to buy homes, according to the Economist — although less so in Japan than in China and South Korea.

But Japan has long been seen as a laboratory for what happens as a population ages. The Japanese government has introduced policies in recent decades to incentivize people to have more children, including cash incentives and free preschool, [with mixed results](#).

Elon Musk, Tesla's billionaire chief executive, [stirred controversy](#) last month when he said on Twitter that Japan would "eventually cease to exist" unless the demographic trends changed.

Commentators responded that Japan is not at risk of disappearing but that its future [depends](#) on immigration.

Demographic anxieties have spurred reconsideration of the [country's immigration policy](#), long one of the most restrictive among industrialized nations. The country rarely grants [refugee status](#). Blue-collar foreign workers, such as the [Vietnamese who staff Japan's restaurants](#), can remain in the country for only five years and cannot bring their families into the country.

Immigration has been politically taboo for decades, with Japan's right wing airing concerns that an influx of foreigners would dilute the country's ethnic homogeneity and culture.

The Japanese government has taken steps to ease restrictions. A construction worker from China in April became the first foreign worker to be recognized under a new "specified skills" visa system created in 2019, meaning that his wife and son can come to live with him in Japan, [Asahi reported](#).

Officials in November indicated that the government planned to expand the looser rules to other understaffed sectors beyond construction and shipbuilding, which [could open up residency](#) to a larger number of foreigners.

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| HEADLINE | 06/03 Russian artillery tests Ukrainian morale |
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| SOURCE | https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/06/04/ukraine-east-artillery-war/ |
| GIST | <p>ON THE ROAD TO LYMAN, Ukraine — First came the distant bang of Russian artillery firing.</p> <p>Then the ominous whistle and crackle of incoming shells, which landed within 50 feet of a Ukrainian tank position, sending dirt and rocks flying and shards of deadly metal slashing through the air. The soil shook — boom, boom, boom.</p> <p>Ukrainian troops dove under their tank, screaming at Washington Post reporters to take cover with them. Together, they pressed their bodies against the damp earth and grass, as Russian firepower rained down along this eastern front, where Moscow is concentrating its military might and inflicting massive casualties on outgunned Ukrainian forces.</p> |

“Get out from under here!” one soldier yelled, understanding that the tank — despite serving as temporary cover — was in fact a prime target. “Go! Go! Go!”

The group sprinted through the woods, as the tank roared down a dirt path.

Having reached its 100th day, the war between Russia and Ukraine is now at a demoralizing stage for many Ukrainian soldiers. In the trenches of this coal mining region, they are reeling from brutal Russian artillery onslaughts that call to mind the indiscriminate savagery of World War I. They are holding out hope for victory despite the grim reality of their struggle’s mounting cost, and successfully holding the line in many places to make the Russian fight a painful slog.

Russian forces are killing as many as 100 Ukrainian troops each day and wounding up to 500 more on the eastern front, President Volodymyr Zelensky said this week. At that rate, Ukraine would be losing, in about 2½ months, as many forces as the United States lost in Iraq and Afghanistan over 20 years. In recent days, Ukrainian territory has slipped away incrementally to Russian forces, who according to Zelensky now control 20 percent of the country.

“Russian artillery is shooting from morning until evening,” said Volodymyr Pohorilyy, 43, intelligence commander of the Dnipro-1 battalion, which holds several key positions in the region. “If our side shoots one their way, we get 10 or 15 back.”

The Russian military, having failed in its botched attempt to seize Kyiv and overthrow the Ukrainian government, has regrouped for the second stage of the war. Moscow has redirected nearly all its remaining artillery to a single area. The Kremlin’s hope is to accomplish its new stated goal of taking all of Ukraine’s eastern Luhansk and Donetsk regions, which together comprise Donbas.

“In some respects, this is one war but two distinct campaigns,” said Michael Kofman, a Russian military analyst at Virginia-based CNA. “The first was to decide whether or not Ukraine would survive as an independent state — and Russia lost that conflict decisively. ... This second phase is about what territory that independent Ukrainian state will ultimately control, and that remains very much in contest.”

Russia’s catastrophic missteps and embarrassing retreat in the first stage of the war buoyed Ukrainian spirits and resolve. But the barbarity of Russia’s concentrated artillery fire has made the second stage far more challenging for many Ukrainians in the trenches. The war has seen relatively few infantry engagements or tank-on-tank battles; Russia, rather, is concentrating overwhelming artillery power on relatively small areas to blast its way forward in a path of grave destruction.

“They have adopted this technique, which is a World War I technique fundamentally, of using artillery to just obliterate everything in front of them and then crawl over the rubble,” said Frederick W. Kagan, director of the Critical Threats Project at the American Enterprise Institute.

He said facing down such artillery bombardments is daunting and devastating for Ukrainian soldiers.

“The amount of firepower, the number of explosions, the length and duration of the attacks — all of that together, and the fact that you can’t defend against it, you can’t shoot down the rounds, means it’s a lot of casualties and it is also incredibly demoralizing,” Kagan said. “It is disorienting. This is where ‘shell shock’ comes from.”

Moscow is obliterating towns with faraway artillery to minimize its losses and play to the Russian military’s strengths as an artillery-focused force. But Kagan said Moscow is also relying on those tactics because Russian forces have been gutted by casualties and disenchantment from the first phase of the war and have shown an inability to fight successfully otherwise.

The losses Ukrainian forces are suffering are horrible, Kagan said, but they aren’t necessarily going to force Kyiv to capitulate or “lose” the broader war. Even if Russia takes control of all of Donbas, which would be difficult due to Ukraine’s defenses, the Ukrainians still have forces that can counterattack and

retake territory elsewhere, he noted. Ukrainian troops, for example, recently launched a counteroffensive near the occupied city of Kherson.

On Thursday afternoon, Ukrainian soldiers said the four rounds of artillery that struck their position appeared consistent with cluster munitions. Such weapons are banned under an international treaty because of their ability to inflict indiscriminate damage in populated areas or leave behind unexploded ordnance as they spray “bomblets” over a wide area. Neither Ukraine nor Russia is a signatory to the treaty.

No soldiers or journalists were wounded in the attack, which appeared to come from the direction of Lyman, a small city that the Russians recently seized.

Ukraine’s losses are mounting as Ukraine awaits further assistance from the West. The Biden administration is sending Ukraine M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems, commonly known as HIMARS, but U.S. officials have said it will take about three weeks to train Ukrainian forces after they arrive. Russia possesses artillery with longer ranges, allowing Moscow to strike Ukrainian troops from afar. Kyiv lacks such equipment, and has less ammunition.

In interviews with nearly two dozen troops in recent days, many bemoaned their lack of adequate ammunition, saying they will be unable to push back the Russians and regain Ukrainian territory without significant assistance. Several troops reached by phone Friday said major shelling attacks were underway in the key hubs of Slovyansk and Bakhmut.

The situation has been challenging for Ukrainian military morale. Artillery shells cover a wide radius when they explode, sending life-threatening shards of metal in all directions. Russia also has been using TOS-1A systems firing thermobaric warheads, sometimes called vacuum bombs, which can kill soldiers even in trenches by unleashing multiple pressure blast waves.

For weeks, Pohorilyy said, troops from his battalion fought to defend the city of Rubizhne, even as they waited for further Western aid. The Ukrainians ultimately suffered severe losses and were forced to fall back.

The city is northwest of Severodonetsk, where Russian forces are battling with Ukrainian troops in the city center. If Moscow takes the city, the Kremlin will be able to boast that its forces control nearly all of the Luhansk region.

“We need help,” Pohorilyy said. “If it was foot soldiers against foot soldiers we could do something about it. But they’re 10 kilometers away, just throwing bombs at us.”

Russian forces are also destroying roads and buildings as they advance, commanders said, leaving fewer places for Ukrainian troops — or civilians — to take shelter.

“They don’t hold a city until they destroy it,” Pohorilyy said.

Capt. Aleksandr Taranushchenko, 37, said that for three weeks his company has held a small position next to the river that runs near Rubizhne, moving back and forth over a small footbridge that separates them from Russian forces.

To have any chance of pushing the Russians back, he said, they need heavy artillery, along with antitank and antiaircraft weapons.

“The city isn’t standing anymore,” he said. “The only thing left is our position. Everything is in ruins.”

Scenes of ruin and resilience from 100 days of war in Ukraine

The immense destruction from weeks of such Russian tactics has left civilians here in dire conditions — some hunkered down in basements in encircled towns, others preparing for the same in the weeks to come. Many civilians have been wounded and killed in strikes.

In several small towns scattered near the front lines, water, gas and power have been cut after strikes hit critical infrastructure. In Slovyansk, civilians, including the elderly, are visiting public pumps to fill jugs with water.

At one hospital in the region this week, soldiers spilled out of ambulances — many bleeding from apparent shrapnel wounds.

Alexiy Holovko, 29, who belongs to the Dnipro-1 battalion, spent more than a month working as a doctor in the trenches in Rubizhne, where he said at least 10 soldiers were wounded each day. Sometimes, he said, they would be patched up and then head right back out to fight. The wounds were almost entirely from long-distance shelling.

“We haven’t seen the enemy in the eyes a lot,” he said.

When troops witness the severity of these injuries, it can be even more dangerous for morale than battlefield deaths, several commanders said.

“Wounded people can mentally damage the unit,” said Yura Bereza, 52, lead commander of the Dnipro-1 battalion. “They’re yelling, they’re feeling horrible. People who are supposed to be shooting have to stop to help them.”

On a recent morning, the battalion’s commanders, who each oversee a different key route in the Donetsk region, gathered in a war room at their makeshift base. They leaned over a large wooden table covered in paper maps, small triangles marking strategic positions.

The leaders were plotting how to defend their dwindling territory as the Russians plowed ahead, cutting off strategic supply routes and shelling key roads used by Ukrainian troops.

In the small town of Zolote, where troops said civilians are left without food and water, Russian troops surrounded Ukrainians on three sides, said Sgt. Yevhen Bazulin, 44, commander of a company holding a position there. The Russians launch nonstop shelling on Ukrainian troops, leaving them unable to push forward.

So far, he said, one of his soldiers there has been killed and eight others wounded.

“They’re in hell,” Bereza called out from across the room.

The Russians are “firing everything at them,” Bazulin said of his troops in Zolote. “We don’t always understand where they’re shooting from.”

Even after they come under intense shelling, he said, they are sometimes left with no option but to stay put and risk being hit again.

“I can’t go left or right because then I’ll have an empty space,” he said. “I can’t go forward because there are Russians there. I can’t go backward because then I’d be pulling back.”

The constant artillery attacks are also challenging Ukraine’s ability to reinforce positions and hold current territory.

On Wednesday, down a dirt road in a rural part of the Donetsk region, a small team of Ukrainian soldiers belonging to the Dnipro-1 battalion sat next to trenches they had dug to attack tanks in case of further Russian advance.

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| | <p>Moments later, the bang of incoming artillery echoed through the sky. Then the whistle of a shell.</p> <p>The troops scrambled toward shelter, shoving Washington Post reporters ahead of them into an underground bunker.</p> <p>Over the next two minutes, two more shells exploded just outside, all within around 500 feet of the Ukrainians' bunker.</p> <p>As the sky went quiet, a Ukrainian armored personnel carrier charged down the dirt road, with stressed soldiers hanging on tight as they fled the scene. The vehicle cut onto a main road and raced away, fleeing toward safety in a place where — Ukrainian soldiers have learned — nowhere is fully safe.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/03 US envoy vows to protect Syria refugees |
| SOURCE | https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/03/us/politics/united-nations-turkey-syria-refugees.html |
| GIST | <p>HATAY, Turkey — The Alaa Aldin family bakery could have been a casualty of Syria's civil war. Instead, it has become a symbol of what American officials describe as the resilience of refugees trying to survive a conflict that many fear has been forgotten.</p> <p>The three brothers Ahmad, Iyad and Bassam Alaa Aldin decided to relocate the business in 2013 to escape the violence that has since shattered their hometown, Idlib. With their wives and children, they moved across the border and opened a gleaming new bakery in the southern Turkish city of Hatay, in a neighborhood that now is so teeming with Syrians that it evokes comparisons to Damascus before the war. Their 25 employees are also Syrian refugees.</p> <p>"What this shows to me, and to the world, is that refugees can contribute to a country," Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the American ambassador to the United Nations, said this week at the bakery, in front of stacks of pistachio rolls and baklava dripping with honey.</p> <p>"The message they have heard from me is that we have not forgotten Syria," she said as the brothers stood nearby.</p> <p>It also was a pointed message to the government of Turkey, which wants to move many of the 3.7 million Syrian refugees in the country back across the border.</p> <p>In an already strained economy, many Turks have blamed refugees for accepting lower wages so that they are hired for a limited number of available jobs in the country. Hard-line politicians have long accused Turkey's president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, of having an open-door policy that they say allowed "an invasion" of Syrians, Afghans and others escaping conflicts.</p> <p>Mr. Erdogan has promised to send at least some refugees back, and this week he threatened a new military offensive in Syria against Kurdish fighters, in part to clear a safe passage for the refugees' return.</p> <p>The United States has criticized the planned Turkish assault, which targets Kurdish fighters in northern Syria in a conflict that long predates the civil war that began in 2011. On Wednesday, Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken warned that a Turkish incursion would further destabilize the region.</p> <p>It could also force more Syrians to flee — as could the possible closure of a route that the United Nations uses to deliver food, water, medicine and other supplies to millions of people in Idlib province in northwestern Syria.</p> <p>Peace talks that had been shepherded by the United States and Russia have been stalemated for years, underpinning a decade of human devastation and diplomatic disappointments.</p> |

After 11 years of war, Syria has become a cautionary example of what can happen in a conflict with no end in sight, like the one that began 100 days ago in Ukraine.

“The world’s outreach is absent,” said Ammar al-Selmo, a member of the White Helmets, a rescue organization that operates in rebel-held areas in Syria, mostly in the country’s northwest.

“There is no action on Syria,” he added, “and I’m so sorry to say this war has moved to Ukraine — the same tactic of war, happening right now in Ukraine, the same suffering.”

“What happened in Syria is a rehearsal for what happened in Ukraine later,” Mr. al-Selmo said.

Ms. Thomas-Greenfield spent two days in Hatay this week, and traveled to the Syrian border, to assess the potential fallout should the United Nations be forced to end its aid deliveries to Idlib in July, as many diplomats and relief workers anticipate. Already, U.N. officials are emptying their warehouses to stockpile aid in Syria in case Russia vetoes an annual Security Council measure that would allow deliveries to continue for another year.

Russia, a benefactor of President Bashar al-Assad of Syria, has accused the international aid deliveries of violating Syria’s sovereignty while supporting extremists in Idlib. In a recent interview, the deputy Russian ambassador to the United Nations, Dmitry Polyanskiy, cast doubt that the U.N. deliveries would continue, given that sticking points over the mission in years past had been smoothed over only in last-minute negotiations with the United States.

Diplomatic talks between the United States and Russia have all but halted since Moscow invaded Ukraine in February. But Ms. Thomas-Greenfield said she would try to reopen discussions with Russian diplomats at the U.N. to preserve the aid — and to ensure that Moscow does not use it as a bargaining chip with other nations to gain leverage in Ukraine.

Mark Cutts, the U.N. relief coordinator for Syria, said the humanitarian aid operation was the largest in the world, with more than 56,000 truckloads of lifesaving supplies delivered since 2014. As many as four million people in Syria — including an estimated 1.7 million living in tents — receive supplies that are delivered to Idlib, the last large rebel enclave in Syria and an area that has also become a haven for extremists linked to Al Qaeda.

“No one should have to live in tents for more than a decade,” Mr. Cutts said. “And we’re already not providing the assistance that’s needed.”

Ms. Thomas-Greenfield put it more bluntly. Without the aid, she said, “babies will die.”

On the Turkish side of the border, known as Point Zero, the deputy governor of Hatay, Orhan Akturk, said the amount of assistance seemed to be lower than in the past. The U.N. mission “should be extended,” he said. “That’s important, given the alternative.”

The United States and Turkey, both members of NATO, have formed an uneasy alliance over the last decade as Mr. Erdogan has sought to stifle political opposition and free speech, drawing American condemnation. A belief among many Turks that the United States played a shadowy role in the failed coup attempt against Mr. Erdogan in 2016 fueled the tensions.

Both countries oppose Mr. al-Assad’s grip on power but are bitterly divided over Kurdish fighters in northern Syria. Turkey considers them terrorists, but the United States views them as partners who helped beat back the Islamic State.

More recently, Mr. Erdogan has blocked Sweden and Finland from joining NATO, aligning with Russian opposition to expanding the military alliance.

Ms. Thomas-Greenfield spoke Thursday with Sedat Onal, a Turkish deputy foreign minister. A description of the conversation, released by her office, said the two agreed on the importance of keeping U.N. aid flowing to Syria. It also noted the American opposition to the upcoming Turkish offensive against the Syrian Kurds.

Human rights advocates have for years accused Mr. Erdogan of deporting refugees, in violation of international laws, and relocating them in areas in Syria near the border where Turkish forces have pushed out Kurdish fighters.

In an interview later Thursday, Ms. Thomas Greenfield said it was “wishful and hopeful thinking” for Turkey to try to justify returning refugees to so-called safe zones where many of the Syrians have never lived.

She added: “Refugees will determine whether it is safe for them to go back.”

Mr. Erdogan’s government has already begun building an estimated 100,000 brick houses in Idlib for the returning refugees and other Syrians in a process that Turkey’s interior minister, Suleyman Soylu, said as recently as Wednesday would be voluntary. Mr. Erdogan has also pledged to build schools and hospitals in Syria to entice refugees to voluntarily return.

“We are not going to leave humanity alone. We are not going to turn our backs to our neighbors,” Mr. Soylu said Wednesday in Ankara, the Turkish capital. But, he said, “we know that it is not possible for us to carry another wave of migration,” and he accused Western governments of failing to offer solutions.

In Hatay, the 67-year-old Mohammed Faisal said he could not go back to Syria.

He survived 15 years in jail for speaking out against the Syrian government and another four years of civil war before escaping in 2015 to Turkey, where he feels safe.

People still living in Syria are “in a very hard situation,” said the man, who did not want to be identified by his full name for fear of reprisal.

Without international aid, he said, “you can consider these people as dead.”

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| HEADLINE | 06/03 Russia, Africa leaders meet; hopes for each |
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| SOURCE | https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/03/world/europe/russia-africa-grain.html |
| GIST | <p>DAKAR, Senegal — A meeting on Friday between the head of the African Union and President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia highlighted the acute needs each one hopes the other can fill: Africa needs food, and the Kremlin needs allies.</p> <p>Russia’s blockade of Ukraine, ordinarily a major exporter of grain, has worsened food crises in Africa and the Middle East, and the African Union chief, President Macky Sall of Senegal, said the grain should be freed up.</p> <p>“Our countries, although they are far from the theater, are victims of this crisis on an economic level,” Mr. Sall said at a joint news conference with Mr. Putin in the Black Sea resort of Sochi.</p> <p>At the same time, Mr. Sall told Mr. Putin, whom he called his “dear friend Vladimir,” that Western sanctions on Russia had compounded Africa’s lack of access to grain — an argument Moscow has been making. Mr. Sall explicitly called for the lifting of restrictions on exports of Russian wheat and fertilizer.</p> <p>Mr. Sall’s comments were something of a diplomatic victory for Mr. Putin. European leaders have accused the Russian president of creating a global food crisis by blocking wheat exports and seizing Ukrainian grain, all the while trying to blame shortages on sanctions imposed by the United States and the European Union.</p> |

Global food stocks were already low before the invasion, and the war has made the shortfall worse. African countries import more than 40 percent of their wheat from Russia and Ukraine. The United Nations says food prices worldwide are 23 percent higher than a year ago, reflecting the tight supply.

The United States and its allies have condemned the invasion of Ukraine and have cut most economic ties to Russia, leaving Moscow with fewer diplomatic and trading partners.

But Russia has longstanding ties to many African countries, some dating to its Soviet-era support for liberation struggles against colonial rulers. Mr. Putin has cultivated those relations and has so far mitigated criticism from most African countries.

Mr. Putin gathered African leaders in Sochi in 2019 and has positioned the continent as key to Russia's interests, while France and the United States have withdrawn from involvement in some conflicts there.

With little investment, Russia has made itself a central player on the continent, becoming Africa's largest supplier of arms, propping up authoritarian leaders and portraying itself as being on the side of African countries in their fight for more independence from the United States and its allies in Europe and Asia.

"Those friends and allies Russia needs, it can find them on the African continent, so it wants to keep such relations tight," said Pauline Bax, an expert on Africa with the International Crisis Group.

Still, such efforts have paid off. Russia has managed to mute criticism of its invasion of Ukraine among leaders [in Africa but also in Asia and Latin America](#).

In April, the United Nations General Assembly voted 93 to 24 to exclude Russia from the U.N. Human Rights Council. But most African nations either voted against the measure, abstained or simply did not cast a vote, including countries usually aligned with the views of Western countries, like Senegal, a regional peace broker.

Gilles Yabi, the director of the Wathi research group in Dakar, said the vote created some surprise outside Africa, revealing a perception in the United States and Europe that African countries would not act independently in the crisis.

"The ramifications of the conflict for Africa are economic," Mr. Yabi said. "It's legitimate that African countries look at the war according to their interests."

Appearing with Mr. Putin on Friday, Mr. Sall claimed, erroneously, that "despite enormous pressure, the majority of African countries have avoided to condemn Russia in this situation." At least 30 of Africa's 54 countries have condemned the invasion in some fashion, though generally without the vehemence seen in Washington or European capitals.

Paul Stronski, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace who has studied Russia's relations with Africa, said the United States and Europe liked to think that Russia has been isolated since it invaded Ukraine.

"Macky Sall's visit on behalf of the African Union, the votes at the U.N., show that Russia might be isolated from America, Europe, Taiwan and Japan, but necessarily not from the rest of the world," he said.

The African Union has vowed to remain in a neutral position in the conflict, and Mr. Sall has tried to cast himself as a potential mediator. Yet in practice, some analysts say, the African Union has showed deference to Russia.

That was evident when, after his talks with Mr. Putin, Mr. Sall was scheduled to fly back to Africa on Friday without meeting with the Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelensky.

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| | <p>In addition, Mr. Zelensky has asked for months to address the African Union, and even though Mr. Sall said this week that the Ukrainian leader could soon address the organization in a videoconference, no date has been announced.</p> <p>Joseph Siegle, the director of research at the Africa Center for Strategic Studies, an arm of the Pentagon's National Defense University, noted that Mr. Putin has tried to portray his invasion of Ukraine as an ideological battle against the West. That message has resonated across Africa, he said.</p> <p>Mr. Putin has even used the looming grain shortage to cast the United States and its allies in bad light, he said. "He is twisting the narrative to suggest that the sanctions are causing the pain and price inflation for food across the globe, rather than acknowledging that the entire food crisis related to the conflict is his making," Mr. Siegle said.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/03 Zelensky: end US, Russia sister cities ties |
| SOURCE | https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/03/world/europe/zelensky-us-russia-sister-cities.html |
| GIST | <p>RENO, Nev. — President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine called out several American cities for having sister cities in Russia during a video address to the United States Conference of Mayors meeting on Friday.</p> <p>Mr. Zelensky, who spoke to the gathering of mayors just after Vice President Kamala Harris, criticized Chicago; Jacksonville, Fla.; Portland, Ore.; San Diego and San Jose, Calif., for maintaining sister-city ties in Russia. He said those relationships should be severed.</p> <p>"What do those ties give to you? Probably nothing," Mr. Zelensky said. "But they allow Russia to say that it is not isolated."</p> <p>Chicago announced earlier this year that it was suspending, but not permanently ending, its sister-city relationship with Moscow, which had been in place since 1997. Local outlets in San Jose reported earlier this year that city leaders decided to maintain a sister-city relationship with Ekaterinburg, Russia. As of Friday, websites for the sister-city programs in Portland, San Diego and Jacksonville continued to list Russian partners.</p> <p>Many American municipalities have sister-city relationships in several countries. Though the partnerships can include business and political exchanges, the relationships are largely symbolic and are sometimes administered by local nonprofit organizations.</p> <p>But Mr. Zelensky, who spoke to the mayors 100 days after Russia invaded his country, said it was wrong to give Russia even the smallest bit of added credibility.</p> <p>"Don't make any excuses; don't maintain relations with Russia," said Mr. Zelensky, whose speech received applause from the mayors and city employees who had gathered in Reno, Nev. "And please don't let those who became murderers call your cities their sister cities."</p> <p>Officials in Portland referred to a statement from Sister Cities International urging cities not to sever ties with their Russian partners. Officials in the other American cities that Mr. Zelensky named did not immediately respond to requests for comment.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/04 Police briefly evacuate Trafalgar Square |
| SOURCE | https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/04/world/europe/trafalgar-square-london-evacuation.html |
| GIST | <p>LONDON — The police evacuated crowds and cordoned off Trafalgar Square in central London on Saturday morning after responding to a report of a suspicious vehicle, rattling the British capital on the third day of Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee celebrations.</p> |

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| | <p>The Metropolitan Police said on Twitter that the incident, first reported at 9:22 a.m., was not related to terrorism, though they did not specify how they had come to that conclusion, and they said that they would reopen the square. A photograph by the Reuters news agency showed a vehicle being removed on the back of a police truck.</p> <p>“This was investigated and after police took action we have no further concern,” the police tweeted. “This was not terrorism related.”</p> <p>Trafalgar Square lies at the opposite end of the Mall from Buckingham Palace, where a large concert is scheduled for Saturday evening as part of the jubilee festivities.</p> <p>Central London is thronged with visitors from elsewhere in Britain and around the world for a four-day celebration of the queen’s 70 years on the throne. About 20,000 people have tickets to attend the concert in the square in front of the palace that will feature performances by Diana Ross, Duran Duran and others, as well as speeches by Prince Charles and his elder son, Prince William.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/04 Mourning Tiananmen Square and dissent |
| SOURCE | https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/04/world/asia/tiananmen-square-hong-kong-june-4.html |
| GIST | <p>TAIPEI, Taiwan — For decades, a large candlelight vigil was held in Hong Kong each June 4, to commemorate those killed when Chinese soldiers crushed the Tiananmen Square protests in Beijing.</p> <p>On Saturday, smaller crowds gathered in Taipei and other cities around the world — this time mourning not just the people slain 33 years ago, but also the fate of Hong Kong, where the smothering of dissent has put an end to the vigil in Victoria Park, the world’s most prominent public memorial to the victims of 1989.</p> <p>“Now it’s about the two things together — Hong Kong as well as what happened on June 4,” said Francis Tse, a former Hong Kong resident who was one of about 400 people commemorating the anniversary in downtown Sydney, Australia. He and many others carried signs calling for the release of activists imprisoned in Hong Kong.</p> <p>“We don’t have the chance to go to Victoria Park anymore,” Mr. Tse said, “but now there are many Victoria Parks like this across the world.”</p> <p>Since 2020, when Beijing imposed a sweeping national security law on Hong Kong, the local government has essentially banned public commemorations of the 1989 killings, which wiped out a student-led protest movement calling for democratic change in China. Taipei — the capital of Taiwan, which has resisted China’s claims of sovereignty for decades — has since emerged as the new center for remembrance of the massacre.</p> <p>On Saturday, those who joined the commemorations in Taipei, Sydney and elsewhere — another was scheduled for London — said they had also come to denounce the erasure of political freedoms in Hong Kong, as well as China’s draconian policies in two other regions, Xinjiang and Tibet.</p> <p>“Now Hong Kong can no longer tell the truth and the real history, we must pass on this history even more in Taiwan,” said Henry Tong, a 41-year-old from Hong Kong who moved to Taiwan last year and attended this year’s vigil in Taipei. “Because of Hong Kong’s prohibition and suppression, it has blossomed everywhere.”</p> <p>By dusk in Taipei, hundreds of people had gathered in the city center, placing electric candles on a banner showing the date of June 4, 1989. People conversing in Cantonese — the language of Hong Kong — were numerous. Organizers in Taipei also screened a film, banned in Hong Kong, about the pro-democracy protests that swept the city in 2019, before the authorities used the security law to stamp them out.</p> |

“Though the city of Hong Kong fell, we didn’t fall for nothing,” said Kacey Wong, an artist from Hong Kong whose work was featured in an exhibition held alongside the Taipei vigil. He said the protest movement of 2019 had “served its purpose: to warn other nations to take cautions against the Chinese Communist Party.”

In 1989, many Hong Kongers were galvanized by the pro-democracy protests in mainland China — which centered on Tiananmen Square but spread across the country — creating a political crisis for the ruling Communist Party.

Troops started flooding into Beijing on the evening of June 3. They shot dead hundreds, some say thousands, of people before reaching the square and clearing it. Killings and bloody standoffs with protesters also erupted in other Chinese cities.

Hong Kong’s vigil, the only major memorial for the victims on Chinese soil, was long seen as proof that civil rights had been preserved in the former British colony since its return to China in 1997. Every year, tens of thousands gathered to light candles and hear speeches by local pro-democracy figures, Tiananmen activists and relatives of those killed in 1989.

Such assemblies are now unthinkable. Since [the 2019 protests](#), the city government has carried out a comprehensive campaign against dissent, empowered by the new security law. It banned the June 4 vigil in 2020 (though [many defied the ban](#)) and again last year, [citing Covid-19 social distancing restrictions](#).

Prominent activists who gathered anyway, or tried to, were jailed under illegal assembly laws. The vigil’s organizer, the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China, disbanded last year.

“There’s this blending happening of the Hong Kong story and the Beijing story,” said Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, a historian of modern China at the University of California Irvine and [the author of “Vigil,”](#) a study of the clampdown in Hong Kong.

“Hong Kong was where you kept alive the memory of what had happened in Beijing in 1989. But now June 4 is also keeping attention back on Hong Kong at a time when the world’s moving on from that,” he said. “It’s also becoming the commemoration of the Hong Kong commemoration.”

This year, too, the Hong Kong government has seemed determined to prevent any public Tiananmen memorial. Outdoor public gatherings continue to be limited to four people under coronavirus pandemic measures. Carrie Lam, Hong Kong’s chief executive, warned that any such gathering would be subject to both the security law and social distancing restrictions.

The authorities closed much of Victoria Park, and the police warned that anyone who tried to meet there could face unauthorized assembly charges.

Local leaders of the Catholic Church said memorial masses would not be held on Saturday, for fear of violating the security law. “Just praying for the deceased in private or in small groups will also be very meaningful,” the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong said.

Lee Cheuk-yan, a former leader of the Hong Kong Alliance who is now in prison for illegal assembly, planned to fast on Saturday and light matches in the evening to remember those killed in 1989, he said in a written [interview with the Ming Pao newspaper](#).

Over the past year, universities in Hong Kong have removed prominent Tiananmen memorials. In December, the University of Hong Kong [took down](#) the “Pillar of Shame,” a 26-foot statue by the [Danish artist Jens Galschiot](#). A depiction of writhing corpses signifying those killed in 1989, it had been at the campus since the late 1990s, [becoming a symbol of defiance](#) against the Chinese authorities.

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| | <p>Since its removal, Prague and other cities have hosted replicas of the statue, and a smaller version of it was set to be unveiled in Taipei on Saturday.</p> <p>Another statue — modeled after the “Goddess of Democracy” erected by students in Tiananmen Square in 1989 — was removed from the Chinese University of Hong Kong campus late last year. In recent days, anonymous activists, determined to commemorate June 4 however they can, have left four-inch replicas of it around the campus.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/03 Kremlin clamps down war criticism |
| SOURCE | https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/03/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-critics-arrests.html |
| GIST | <p>Vladimir Efimov, a local politician on the Kamchatka Peninsula in Russia’s Far East, was charged with “discrediting the army” and ordered to pay a \$500 fine three times in recent months over antiwar images that he displayed on social media.</p> <p>When he continued, reposting battlefield pictures like the wholesale destruction of the Ukrainian port city of Mariupol under Russian bombardment, prosecutors ratcheted up the charges and accused him of a felony — punishable by up to five years in prison or stiffer fines.</p> <p>“They thought that I would be afraid,” Mr. Efimov said, that the fines “would give me cold feet and make me hide away.”</p> <p>Three months ago, President Vladimir V. Putin signed into law draconian measures designed to silence war critics, putting even use of the word “war” off-limits. They prompted some Russians appalled by the invasion to flee the country, forced independent news outlets to shut down, and created a climate of suspicion in which neighbor turned on neighbor.</p> <p>While the laws initially led to a few, highly publicized cases, it is now becoming clear that local prosecutors nationwide are applying them with particular zeal.</p> <p>At least 50 people face prison sentences of up to either 10 years or five years hard labor, or fines of as much as \$77,000, for spreading “false information” about the military. More than 2,000 people have been charged with lesser infractions, according to a human rights organization that tracks cases nationwide.</p> <p>The charges piling up against activists, politicians, journalists and ordinary Russians in big cities and remote towns, from Kamchatka in the Far East to Kaliningrad in the west, provide a stark gauge of how the Kremlin has intensified the repression of those who criticize the war.</p> <p>“Clearly, the goal was to have a chilling effect on the public and on any critical voices against the military operation,” said Pavel Chikov, the head of the Agora Human Rights Group, which tallied the cases and has helped to defend some of the accused. “To a certain extent it was successful, because people are kind of cautious about how they express their opinions.”</p> <p>The two laws address slightly different actions. The harsher one criminalized deliberately spreading “false information” about the military, interpreted as anything outside the official version of events. If the actions cause undefined “grave consequences,” the sentence goes up to 15 years imprisonment or an \$80,000 fine.</p> <p>The second outlawed virtually any protest or public criticism of the war as potentially “discrediting” the military, in a kind of “three strikes” law. It carries fines for the initial incidents, while repeat offenders face criminal charges that carry prison sentences of up to five years or financial penalties. To date, four criminal cases have emerged from among the 2,000 charged, but the numbers are expected to rise, Mr. Chikov said.</p> <p>“If we talk about cases involving freedom of expression, I would say it is the highest number ever,” he added.</p> |

With the first criminal cases only now coming to trial, it remains unclear how harshly judges — generally prone to toe the Kremlin line — will treat defendants.

Defense lawyers are not optimistic. “I would like to hope that the courts will be just and they will listen to our arguments,” said Marina Yankina, the lawyer for a freelance journalist in southwestern Siberia whose trial started Wednesday. “But I have been working for a long time, and unfortunately it is not going to happen.”

The charges against her client, Andrei Novashov, 45, from a small city called Prokopyevsk, are a case in point. Mr. Novashov said he was surprised at being accused of spreading “false information” over five social media posts, including a repost from a well-known photojournalist about the Russian military destroying a maternity hospital in Mariupol.

Officers began breaking down his door at 6 a.m. as if he were “some drug dealer or pimp,” he said. Like most defendants, Mr. Novashov was barred by the judge from using the internet or his phone, but he was able [to speak to a local podcaster](#).

“It is impossible to keep silent,” Mr. Novashov said, while noting ruefully that people around town had mostly reacted to his case with indifference. He added: “People have been taught that nothing is going to change, so the less you know, the better you sleep.”

In an echo of Stalinist times, the new laws have galvanized people to turn in their fellow citizens. After Aleksei Gorinov, 61, a local politician in Moscow, publicly criticized Victory Day events for children when Ukrainian children were dying, five Russians reported him to law enforcement, said his lawyer, Sergei N. Telnov.

The authorities started the case against Mr. Gorinov on April 25, took him to jail on April 27, and issued an indictment on May 1, Mr. Telnov said, adding that “it is super fast.” Mr. Gorinov was accused of spreading false information, including calling the conflict a “war,” since officially it remains a “special military operation.”

In letters to supporters from pretrial detention — where he said he initially slept on a cement floor in an overcrowded cell with suspected thieves and drug dealers from Central Asia — Mr. Gorinov wrote that Russia had reached a sad state when someone who criticized a war faced 10 years imprisonment.

Supporters on Wednesday flocked to the start of his trial, which was live-blogged by a reporter from Mediazona, a website that covers court cases. “A man is judged for his opinion,” Mr. Gorinov said, speaking from the metal courtroom cage where Russian defendants are kept. “When else will you see this?”

In one of the first sentences to be handed down, a court in the Zabaikalsky Region, near the border with China, fined the administrator of a social media channel called “I Live in Ruins” about \$16,000 this week after he was accused of posting forged documents and videos that contained false information about military operations in Ukraine, according to a local website, Chita.ru.

Mr. Chikov says the new laws were modeled on those devised during the pandemic, when the government banned spreading information about Covid that it had not approved. But only nine people have been prosecuted in two years, he said.

It does not take much to be accused of “discrediting” the military. Russians have been prosecuted for wearing workout clothes and even nail polish in the blue and yellow colors of the Ukrainian flag, lawyers said. A lawyer in Kaliningrad defending a client faced the same charge herself after using the word “war” in her arguments.

The vague language of the laws gives prosecutors wide flexibility in bringing charges, while defense lawyers wrestle with how to respond. Defense lawyers said that investigators basically compared what the defendants said with reams of transcripts from briefings by the ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs.

Anything not in the briefings or denied by officials is treated as a lie, said Vladimir V. Vasin, a defense lawyer. “If they write that something is green, it means that it is green, and if they write something is red, then it is red, and everything else will be untrue,” he said.

Mr. Vasin is defending Mikhail Afanasiev, the editor of an online magazine, New Focus, which covers the Republic of Khakassia in southern Siberia.

Mr. Afanasiev has been held in pretrial detention since April 14 for writing a story called “The Refuseniks” about the dreadful conditions — including a perpetually drunk commander, no food and terrible battlefield organization — that prompted 11 members of Rosgvardia, the Russian national guard, to decline to fight.

The journalist believed that he was just doing his job, Mr. Vasin said, but was charged because what he gleaned from interviews was not in the official briefings.

The swelling case list across Russia indicates that prosecutors realized that Moscow wanted results, lawyers said. “There is a feeling that there is a directive to push the cases to the court as soon as possible,” Mr. Chikov said. “Everyone immediately understood that this was of the highest political priority.”

Still, the constant flow of new cases signaled that the laws have not silenced all opposition, he added.

In Kamchatka, a sparsely populated northern Pacific peninsula, Mr. Efimov, 67, heads the local chapter of Yabloko, an ebbing opposition party.

His antiwar posts were not criticizing the military, he said, but the mass “hysteria” in support of the war. Mr. Efimov vowed to continue despite the criminal charges. “Sit there, shut up and praise the president, this is what it is about,” he said.

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| HEADLINE | 06/03 Bay Area county’s mask mandate returns |
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| SOURCE | https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/03/us/alameda-county-mask-mandate.html |
| GIST | <p>Alameda County, the San Francisco Bay Area’s second-most populous county, reinstated on Friday a mask mandate in most indoor spaces, which it had dropped in February.</p> <p>Officials cited growing hospitalizations in Alameda, whose county seat is Oakland, which are up about 35 percent over the last two weeks to a daily average of 129, as of Thursday, according to federal data. Nationally, about 28,000 people were currently in hospitals with the coronavirus, an increase of 17 percent over the last two weeks.</p> <p>Alameda is the first county in California, and the largest jurisdiction in the United States, to issue a universal indoor mask order since the end of the winter Omicron surge.</p> <p>Further south, the public health director of Los Angeles County said Thursday an indoor mask mandate could be reintroduced later this month if cases continue to rise. In April, Philadelphia became the first major American city to reinstate an indoor mask mandate in response to rising coronavirus cases, though it was dropped after a few days.</p> <p>More than 100,000 coronavirus cases are being reported each day in the United States, according to a New York Times database, a figure that captures only a portion of the true toll. Many infections go uncounted in official reports, and recent figures are further depressed by reporting delays caused by the Memorial Day holiday.</p> |

“Daily new admissions of patients with Covid-19 rapidly increased in recent days and now exceed last summer’s peak,” the Alameda County Public Health Department said [in a statement on Thursday](#) announcing the new rules.

The [order](#) requires masks to be worn at indoor businesses and workplaces, including offices, stores, theaters and conference centers; in restaurants and bars when not eating or drinking; and on public transportation, including taxis and ride-share vehicles.

The county, with its 1.6 million people in the eastern Bay Area, is not mandating masking in schools, with the academic year in its final days, and the order does not apply to Berkeley, which has its own public health department.

“Rising Covid cases in Alameda County are now leading to more people being hospitalized and today’s action reflects the seriousness of the moment,” Dr. Nicholas Moss, the county health officer, said in the statement.

“We cannot ignore the data, and we can’t predict when this wave may end,” he said. “Putting our masks back on gives us the best opportunity to limit the impact of a prolonged wave on our communities.”

Oakland International Airport will also [require](#) everyone two and older to wear masks indoors starting Friday. In April, a federal judge in Florida [struck down](#) a mask mandate on public transport, which also applied to airports, train stations and other transportation hubs. The country’s largest airlines [stopped](#) requiring masks on flights, ending a practice that most carriers had followed for nearly two years.

There has not been a widespread return to mandates in California, although some schools and universities have reinstated them. The Sacramento City Unified School District is [mandating](#) masks for all staff and students beginning on Monday. UCLA [resumed indoor masking](#) last week, and Cal Poly San Luis Obispo [did the same on Tuesday](#).

In Los Angeles County, the nation’s most populous county with about 10 million people, Barbara Ferrer, the public health director, [said Thursday](#) that a mask mandate could return “if we continue on the current trajectory.”

Hospitalizations are rising even faster there than in Alameda, averaging about 400 each day as of Thursday, a 62 percent increase over the last two weeks, [according to federal data](#).

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| HEADLINE | 06/03 Special Olympics lifts vaccine mandate |
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| SOURCE | https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/03/sports/special-olympics-vaccine-mandate.html |
| GIST | <p>Special Olympics lifted its coronavirus vaccine requirement for athletes and staff members at its U.S.A. Games in Orlando, Fla., this weekend after Florida threatened a \$27.5 million fine over the mandate.</p> <p>In a letter to Special Olympics International on Thursday, state health officials said the vaccine requirement violated Florida law, which prohibits businesses and charitable organizations from requiring proof of vaccination against the coronavirus. The law allows the state’s health department to impose a \$5,000 fine per individual who is asked to provide proof of vaccination, the letter said. About 5,500 participants are expected at the Games, which begin Sunday at Disney World and the ESPN sports complex and run through June 12.</p> <p>Special Olympics will lift the mandate “as required” by the state, “based upon the Florida Department of Health’s interpretation of Florida law,” read a statement issued on Thursday by the organization. It added that those who had registered for the Games but could not participate because of the vaccine requirement</p> |

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| | <p>would now have the option to attend, and that it was “making best efforts” to accommodate those participants.</p> <p>Speaking at a news conference on Friday, Gov. Ron DeSantis said that Special Olympics’ vaccine requirement had no “connection” to competition and unfairly targeted a marginalized group.</p> <p>“To go after Special Olympians, who all they wanted to do was compete, was not consistent with Florida law and it’s not the right thing to do,” he said. “Let them compete. We want everybody to be able to compete.”</p> <p>Mr. DeSantis, a Republican who has long been defiant in his approach to the pandemic by refusing to impose restrictions and blocking vaccine and mask mandates, said that “a lot of these Special Olympians have had Covid by now — I mean, most people have had it — and to impose that mandate now in June of 2022 did not make sense.”</p> <p>In order to compete, Special Olympians must have an intellectual disability, a cognitive delay or significant learning or vocational limitations. A 2021 study published in the New England Journal of Medicine found that having an intellectual disability was “the strongest independent risk factor” for contracting the virus and that people with such disabilities were at “substantially increased risk of dying” from Covid-19.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/03 North Idaho Covid cases rising |
| SOURCE | https://www.krem.com/article/news/health/coronavirus/north-idaho-covid-19-positivity-rates-rising/293-93d00cef-54fc-4b38-b32a-3fb6ea466f1b |
| GIST | <p>COEUR D'ALENE, Idaho — COVID-19 positivity rates in North Idaho shot up over the past week.</p> <p>Kootenai County’s was at 20% based on 355 PCR tests for the week ending May 28. It has risen six consecutive weeks after hitting 3% on April 16, as reported by our news partners, the Coeur d’Alene Press.</p> <p>The Panhandle Health District’s positivity rate climbed to 19.1% based on 585 PCR tests, up from 1.4% on March 26.</p> <p>The state’s rose to 9% based on 12,959 PCR tests as its positivity rate has climbed steadily from 1.5% on March 19.</p> <p>The PHD reported 214 new cases in the past week, but it has not reported a death attributed to COVID-19 since April 26.</p> <p>There are six people currently hospitalized with COVID-19 in the district, according to PHD’s website.</p> <p>Statewide, hospitalizations due to COVID-19 were at 76 as of May 30, according to the state’s website. It reached a low of 31 on April 20.</p> <p>Kootenai County’s fully vaccinated rate of those age 5 and over is 45%, which places it among the lowest in Idaho, which has a fully vaccinated rate of 55%.</p> <p>The national rate of those 5 and over who are fully vaccinated is 71%.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/03 Olympia’s new approach to RV parking |
| SOURCE | https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/olympia/olympias-approach-rv-parking/281-838de169-5bc4-4c7f-8ad4-780db151fadb |
| GIST | OLYMPIA, Wash. — After living on the streets for years, David Reynolds said he has seen it all. |

"I've slept with newspapers stuffed in my coat to stay warm," said Reynolds, who said he has regular work as a bricklayer, but can only afford to live in his trailer.

When Reynolds parked on Olympia's Ensign Road last month he received something he had never seen before - a notice to apply for a permit to park on the public street.

"Ensign Road will be changed to no parking except by permit," said Reynolds, reading the paperwork from the City of Olympia informing him that, without a permit, his vehicle would be towed.

Last week, the city required those living in vehicles along the quarter-mile stretch of Ensign Road to agree to a list of conditions. Those conditions include the proper disposal of trash and human waste and only one lawn chair per person outside of the vehicle. Residents cannot engage in violent behavior.

Thirty-three vehicle owners received permits. After just over a week, none have been revoked, according to Olympia Homeless Response Coordinator, Kim Kondrat.

"Every person deserves basic shelter. And the housing is so expensive, and we have no shelter capacity right now in our community," said Kondrat, who said she has not heard of any other cities offering similar permits.

She said the area has remained relatively clean and she has only issued minor citations, mostly for trash issues.

Kondrat said the permits are not permission for the owners to stay parked on Ensign Road indefinitely.

"We want to eventually move them all from Ensign, but not until we have a different alternative to offer them," said Kondrat. "Each individual is different and they'll all need something different."

Kondrat said the city hopes to have the permit holders in more permanent housing by June of 2023. She said the road will be a no parking zone by then.

Reynolds said he won't be getting a permit. He said he was planning on moving off Ensign Road soon anyway.

However, he likes the idea of giving people a break, while also having some rules to follow.

"Why not?," said Reynolds. "It's better than having everybody just roaming around."

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| HEADLINE | 06/03 DNR expects 'normal' fire season |
| SOURCE | https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/wildfire/2022-wildfire-season-washington-outlook/281-c104b571-276e-49a4-b814-a80d0a0bd5d8 |
| GIST | <p>SEATTLE — The Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) said it is hopeful this fire season will be less intense than last year thanks to high rainfall and melting snowpack, though it is still preparing extensively and asks everyone to do what they can to prevent causing fires in the first place.</p> <p>Other researchers have shared similar expectations.</p> <p>As a longtime Seattleite, Crystal Raymond said she remembers wet, cold springs in years past, and that it's been interesting and different than the past couple of years.</p> <p>"It's great to have this rain with the drought we have throughout the northwest but also recognizing the fact that things could change really quickly," said Raymond, a climate adaptation specialist at the University of</p> |

Washington's [Climate Impacts Group](#). "So we don't want to let our guard down heading into August and September."

Raymond said a strong La Niña and favorable conditions this spring helped moisten vegetation and ease drought in some areas, though there could be some locations that are still more prone than others.

It's also important to note the impact increased precipitation has on fuel for fire. Raymond said that in eastern Washington, for example, spring rains can boost brush and grass, but when that dries out during the hot summer, it can result in more fire potential than in forest-heavy environments.

DNR held a briefing Thursday on preparations underway for fire season and what is expected based on current weather patterns. A meteorologist shared that a strong La Niña has played a role in precipitation and that extra rainfall and heavy snowpack have almost completely abated drought conditions west of the Cascades. Still, the summer could bring hot, dry conditions, and fire season is expected to peak later in the summer.

DNR said it has 120 engines planned to service fires this year, the same as in 2021. It is using funding passed by lawmakers to create a fleet of dozers to help with building fire lines, though there have been some supply chain problems with transport.

The department is actively hiring operators. The funding also meant money for three more 20-person crews, which DNR plans to parse into 10-person teams to be spread across different regions. Additional hiring and training are underway.

Most fires are human-caused, with debris burning the No. 1 reason, according to DNR. If people need to burn, they must follow burn bans, be conscious of weather conditions and should keep piles small, DNR said.

The second-leading cause of human-caused fires is recreational or ceremonial burning.

While DNR prepares to fight fires, it asks everyone to limit activity that could cause them in the first place.

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| HEADLINE | 06/03 Backlash over SPD sexual assault staffing |
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| SOURCE | https://komonews.com/news/operation-crime-justice/as-seattle-police-struggle-to-investigate-some-sex-assault-cases-backlash-grows |
| GIST | <p>SEATTLE — There is outrage and mounting backlash after a memo showed the Seattle Police Department has delayed some sexual assault investigations because of dire staffing shortages at the agency.</p> <p>Survivors, advocates and some city leaders are calling the situation unacceptable.</p> <p>"The impact is exasperation," said sex assault survivor Leah Griffin. "The impact is, 'here we are again, more of the same.'"</p> <p>The unrelenting fight for justice has always been a struggle for her since she was raped in her own neighborhood in 2014.</p> <p>"The system I encountered was fundamentally broken," said Griffin, who has been on a mission to help other survivors.</p> <p>While representing survivors on the Sexual Assault Forensic Examination Task Force, she helped pass game changing legislation to help survivors, such as the passage of bills that require rape kits to be tested, tracked and stored.</p> |

Now, she's running to be the next state representative for the 34th District.

"My story is indicative of that, in 2014 back when the police department was fully funded, I still waited for hours for somebody to take my report," Griffin said. "I had to pass a state law to make the police do the bare minimum to just test my rape kit."

She and other survivors are outraged after an internal Seattle Police Department memo to the police chief revealed that the agency's sexual assault unit is so understaffed it stopped assigning detectives new cases with adult victims this year.

"Our society, our police, our systems, our societies, don't care about rape (and) don't care about survivors," Griffin said. "That is the impact of this."

The unit's staffing dropped from 12 detectives in 2019 to just 4 in February.

Police officials said a fifth detective was added in May, and a sixth is set to start soon.

State Sen. Manka Dhingra said the impact of the police staffing crisis includes fewer referrals to prosecutors, which can kill a case; adding to the trauma of victims who wait longer; and the discouragement for victims to report cases.

"It is disturbing on many levels," Dhingra said. "Especially because we need our law enforcement officers to be able to distinguish between crimes of property and crimes of violence. And when something as heinous as sexual assault occurs, there's simply no excuse not to prioritize these cases."

She has been a senior deputy attorney in the King County Prosecutor's Office for decades, and she co-founded API CHAYA, an organization that advocates on behalf of sexual assault survivors as well as victims of domestic violence and human trafficking.

A 2020 King County Auditor's report on sex crimes found that victims and their cases are harmed by gaps in the justice process, particularly if their cases aren't assigned to detectives or prosecuted in a timely fashion.

"This is unacceptable," Dhingra said. "This is the year 2022. We've had the MeToo movement (and) we have made promises to survivors, saying we believe them," Dhingra said. "It is time for our law enforcement to show up."

Interim police Chief Adrian Diaz insisted this week that no sex assault case is being ignored. He said while the department deals with the staggering staffing crisis each case is now triaged.

Cases are now being cross assigned to the domestic violence unit and more officers are now being trained for the unit.

"We are working through every case," he said. "It's taking a little bit longer for some sexual assault cases."

Griffin says this a chance for police agencies to start making changes.

"This is a real opportunity for the city of Seattle (and) for Seattle PD to take a good hard look at how they've been practicing, not recently, but we're talking about decades," Griffin said.

KOMO News reached out to Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell for comment; he sent a statement saying:

"Any lack of urgency around sexual assault investigations or arrests is wholly unacceptable. Sexual assault cases must be exhaustively investigated, and offenders must be held accountable – period. When we assumed office, the SPD Sexual Assault Unit had a depleted number of deployable staff, and our

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| | evaluation of these limited resources underscore the need for increasing SPD staffing to ensure justice for survivors. While SPD has added a detective to the Sexual Assault Unit and is in the process of adding another, serving in this unit requires specialized training necessary for this challenging work to best meet the needs of survivors. We are working with SPD to explore alternatives for improving investigative capacity to make an immediate impact. Ultimately, we must end SPD's staffing crisis and ensure investigations are thorough, swift, and complete." |
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| HEADLINE | 06/03 Seattle clears Little Saigon encampment |
| SOURCE | https://komonews.com/news/project-seattle/homeless-encampment-on-s-weller-street-in-little-saigon-moved-businesses-find-relief |
| GIST | <p>A growing encampment on S. Weller Street in Seattle's Little Saigon neighborhood has been cleared and some businesses in the area said they are now seeing progress but they want to see more.</p> <p>Those in the area said the camp has been linked to shootings, several fires and illegal activity that includes drug use, prostitution and a black market of stolen goods.</p> <p>The homeless encampment, which had about 20 tents, was cleared away two weeks ago on May 18. It had been slated to be removed on May 25 but police said recent crimes connected to the camp were a major factor in moving the removal date up.</p> <p>Concrete blocks now line the area where the tents had been, placed there by a business to keep RVs from returning. There are also wooden planters further down the street.</p> <p>"It's kind of refreshing," said Ameer Abdulrahman, who works at Reef's Kitchen at the Commissary on S. Weller Street. "I feel like I'm in a new place now. "I'm happy because they're gone. I don't know where they put them."</p> <p>"It's calm. It's early nice," said Yenvy Pham. "We don't have customers being hesitant anymore."</p> <p>"It's a lot nicer," said John Cao, owner of King's Oriental Foods Company, which is located directly across from where the tents had been located. "It's much better. A lot of our clients feel really safe and happy."</p> <p>Business owners like Yenvy Pham of Hello Em Viet Coffee and Roastery say it took a lot to get the help they needed from the city to have the camp removed.</p> <p>"Through a lot of collaborative effort, we had Goodwill, my landlord, and Friends of Little Saigon really advocating for public safety on our street," Pham said. "I think it was (putting) a lot of weekly and daily pressure on the City to be accountable."</p> <p>Businesses and organizations on the street asked for resources to help address the problems from the camp, including de-escalation and personal safety training for staff members to deal with drug users and people facing a mental health crisis.</p> <p>They asked the City to do more to stop the encampment from growing and to deter the illegal activity there, which included tent fires, shootings and countless calls to police.</p> <p>"We saw a lot of shootings, a lot of theft, and just harassment," Pham said. "It's not always from the residents. It's what they attract. It's a very complicated situation."</p> <p>According to Mayor Bruce Harrell's office, the city's HOPE team found 25 campers at the site.</p> <p>On the day the camp was cleared, seven residents were moved to a homeless shelter while at least three others moved to a shelter days before the camp was cleared.</p> |

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| | In a written statement, the mayor's office said: "It is our goal to connect everyone onsite to shelter and/or services prior to an encampment removal if there are attempts to re-camp in this area those will be addressed by the Unified Care Team." |
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| HEADLINE | 06/03 Recall: Electrolux, Frigidaire refrigerators |
| SOURCE | https://www.q13fox.com/news/refrigerator-recall-electrolux-frigidaire-ice-makers-choking-hazard |
| GIST | <p>Electrolux is recalling roughly 370,000 refrigerators over potential choking hazards.</p> <p>According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the company has received 185 reports of pieces breaking in the ice makers, which can then fall into the ice bucket and into a glass. One of the people who complained reported gum lacerations.</p> <p>The 13 models include the Frigidaire and Electrolux side-by-side, top freezer and multi-door refrigerators. Consumers who own one of the recalled models are urged to stop using the refrigerator, empty the ice bucket and contact Electrolux to schedule a technician.</p> <p>The company said about 367,500 recalled models were sold in the U.S. and an additional 7,180 were sold in Canada. They were sold at Lowe's, Home Depot and appliance stores nationwide between April 2020 and March 2022. Prices ranged from \$1,200 to \$4,300.</p> <p>Consumers can look at the brand name, model and serial number of their refrigerators by checking the label on the right panel of the inside of the refrigerator. Visit the CPSC website for a list of recalled products.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/04 Monkeypox circulating undetected? |
| SOURCE | https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/health/officials-find-2-monkeypox-strains-in-us/ |
| GIST | <p>NEW YORK (AP) — Genetic analysis of recent monkeypox cases suggests there are two distinct strains in the U.S., health officials said Friday, raising the possibility that the virus has been circulating undetected for some time.</p> <p>Many of the U.S. cases were caused by the same strain as recent cases in Europe, but a few samples show a different strain, federal health officials said. Each strain had been seen in U.S. cases last year, before the recent international outbreak was identified.</p> <p>Analysis from many more patients will be needed to determine how long monkeypox has been circulating in the U.S. and elsewhere, said Jennifer McQuiston of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.</p> <p>"I think it's certainly possible that there could have been monkeypox cases in the United States that went under the radar previously, but not to any great degree," she told reporters Friday. However, she added, "there could be community level transmission that is happening" in parts of U.S. where the virus has not yet been identified.</p> <p>The CDC said it is trying to increase its work on finding infections, and it's likely more cases will be reported.</p> <p>The findings mean the outbreak likely will be difficult to contain, said Dr. Angela Rasmussen, a virologist at the University of Saskatchewan.</p> <p>It's not clear how long infections have been happening, and where. Some infections may have been misdiagnosed as something else.</p> <p>"We don't really have a good sense of how many cases there are out there," Rasmussen said.</p> |

Monkeypox is endemic in parts of Africa, where people have been infected through bites from rodents or small animals. It does not usually spread easily among people.

But last month, cases began emerging in Europe and the United States. Many — but not all — of those who contracted the virus had traveled internationally, and health officials in a growing number of countries are investigating.

As of Friday, the U.S. had identified at least 20 cases in 11 states. Hundreds of other cases have been found in other countries, many apparently tied to sexual activity at two recent raves in Europe.

So far, many of the reported cases outside Africa have been in men who have sex with men, but health officials stress that anyone can get monkeypox. One heterosexual woman is among the U.S. cases under investigation, officials said.

The illness typically begins with flu-like symptoms and swelling of the lymph nodes, followed by a rash on the face and body.

No monkeypox deaths have been reported in the U.S. or Europe so far. But that could change if infections start occurring in more vulnerable people, like very young children or people with weakened immune systems, Rasmussen said.

She raised another concern: Even if outbreaks among people are contained, it's possible the virus could take hold in the U.S. rodent population — either through pets or unwelcome rodents in homes.

“It's not out of the question,” Rasmussen said.

Also on Friday, the CDC published an analysis of 17 of the first reported U.S. cases. The average age was 40, and all but one identified themselves as men who have sex with men. Fourteen had traveled internationally, to 11 different countries, according to the report.

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| HEADLINE | 06/03 India: biggest jump Covid cases since Mar. |
| SOURCE | https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/world/india-reports-biggest-jump-in-covid-cases-in-months/ |
| GIST | <p><i>Bloomberg</i> - India reported 4,041 new COVID-19 infections on Friday — the highest single-day jump since March 11 — stoking fears of another wave building up in some parts of the densely populated country that has eased almost all restrictions.</p> <p>The South Asian nation has recorded 43.17 million COVID infections since the start of the pandemic and 524,651 fatalities, according to health ministry data, although the World Health Organization has said the actual death toll is significantly higher. The daily positivity rate, or the confirmed COVID cases as a percentage of overall tests, stands at 0.95% for the country while the weekly positivity rate has begun inching up, the data show.</p> <p>The state of Maharashtra, which was also an early hot spot in previous virus waves in India, is again seeing a spike in COVID infections, with the positivity rate breaching 8% this week. Its capital, Mumbai, saw a 231% surge in hospitalizations in May compared with the preceding month. While hospital admissions in May were just 215, the trajectory has alarmed state authorities. India's devastating delta-led wave last summer had pushed daily cases past 400,000, overwhelming hospitals and crematoriums.</p> <p>The Narendra Modi-led federal government asked five states — Maharashtra, Kerala, Telangana, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu — to curb rising infections, according to June 3 letters dispatched by the health ministry to local governments. The ministry asked these states to “maintain a strict watch and take pre-emptive action” to control spread.</p> |

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| | Even as the world learns to live alongside COVID, its highly transmissible variants such as omicron are still triggering new waves in places like China, New Zealand and Taiwan that had so far avoided the worst of the early pandemic. The Chinese cities of Shanghai and Beijing continue to see cases despite hard containment measures, while Hong Kong revived some of its toughest curbs as new variants flared up. |
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| HEADLINE | 06/03 Study: Covid deadly to working class adults |
| SOURCE | https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/nation/covid-19-was-deadly-to-working-class-americans-in-2020-researcher-says/ |
| GIST | <p>TAMPA, Fla. — Working-class Americans died of COVID-19 at five times the rate of those in higher socioeconomic positions during the first year of the pandemic, according to a study.</p> <p>The staggering disparity was revealed in a study of roughly 69,000 U.S. coronavirus victims ages 25 to 64 who died in 2020. It was conducted by a group of researchers including University of South Florida epidemiologist Jason Salemi.</p> <p>The study’s authors found that 68% of the deaths they studied were among people considered to be in a low socioeconomic position, defined as workers whose education stopped at high school. Only about 12% of deaths occurred among people in high socioeconomic positions, defined as those with at least a bachelor’s degree.</p> <p>The researchers said the majority of working-class adults in the U.S. were employed in blue collar, service or retail jobs and couldn’t work remotely in the first year of the virus, before vaccines became widely available in 2021.</p> <p>“Our results support the hypothesis that hazardous conditions of work were a primary driver of joint socioeconomic, gender, and racial/ethnic disparities in COVID-19 mortality,” the researchers wrote.</p> <p>Working-class employees faced “elevated infection risks,” according to a USF summary of the study, compared to higher-paid workers who were “more likely to have fewer exposure risks, options to work remotely, paid sick leave and better access to quality health care.”</p> <p>The report comes as Florida and several parts of the nation grapple with high levels of COVID-19 transmission driven by contagious omicron subvariants. The Tampa Bay region is considered to be at “high” risk of infection, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which recommends wearing masks in indoor public spaces.</p> <p>Though the research is based on deaths that occurred in 2020 — before vaccines reduced COVID-19 mortality across the board — Salemi said he believes working-class people are still at higher risk of sickness and death.</p> <p>He said the study’s findings offer a warning about how the pathogen can deeply impact vulnerable communities.</p> <p>Talk of “getting back to normal,” he said, means “very different things” to different people in the U.S. “Some people are still going to be in the line of fire,” Salemi said.</p> <p>The question facing the country, he said, is what can be done to help working-class employees stay safe?</p> <p>His solutions: Improve ventilation in buildings to reduce indoor transmission; wear high-quality masks indoors to reduce infections; and institute paid sick leave so the infected can stay home instead of spreading the virus.</p> <p>The study was published in April in the peer-reviewed International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. The research team collected provisional COVID-19 death data from the U.S. National</p> |

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| | <p>Center for Health Statistics. Deaths were included if COVID-19 was listed as an underlying or contributing cause of death. The center uses educational levels to measure socioeconomic status.</p> <p>The study found that the age-adjusted COVID-19 death rate for working-class adults was 72.2 deaths per 100,000. For those in high socioeconomic positions, the rate was 14.6 deaths per 100,000.</p> <p>The researchers discovered other disparities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The age-adjusted COVID-19 death rate of working-class Hispanic men was more than 27 times higher than the death rate for white women in higher socioeconomic jobs. • Working-class Black men had a death rate that was nearly 20 times higher than the death rate for white women who graduated from a four-year college. • The death rate for working-class Black women was about 13 times higher than the rate for white women with at least a bachelor's degree. • Working-class white men had a death rate roughly four times higher than the rate for white men in high socioeconomic positions. |
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| HEADLINE | 06/03 L&I emergency heat rules outdoor workers |
| SOURCE | https://www.seattletimes.com/business/agriculture/wa-rolls-out-emergency-heat-protections-for-outdoor-workers-these-new-rules-are-strong/ |
| GIST | <p>Just in time for searing summer temperatures, the state Department of Labor and Industries has released new emergency rules to further protect outdoor workers from the dangers of heat and wildfire smoke.</p> <p>The new rules will require Washington employers to provide outdoor workers adequate cool water and access to shaded areas, as well as paid cooldown breaks every two hours — or more often, if needed, when temperatures hit certain benchmarks.</p> <p>The protections will go into effect for most workers when temperatures hit 89 degrees, marking a significant change from the triple digits required for some vital safeguards in 2021.</p> <p>Workers who wear certain kinds of clothing will be covered by protections at temperatures well below the standard 89 degrees, as well. The protections will kick in at 52 degrees for those who wear vapor barrier clothing or chemical resistant suits, for example. For people wearing double-layer woven clothes — including coveralls, jackets and sweatshirts — the threshold will be 77 degrees.</p> <p>The rules will take hold June 15 and last through September. But they're only in place this year: L&I is drafting permanent regulations, and efforts to create the first federal heat protection standards for outdoor workers are also underway.</p> <p>“The record-setting heat wave last summer underscored the importance of protecting outdoor workers,” Craig Blackwood, L&I’s assistant director for the Division of Occupational Safety & Health, said in a news release. “Add in the smoke from more frequent and devastating wildfires, which is a proven hazard, and it’s a recipe for danger every summer.”</p> <p>Last June’s record-shattering temperatures caused over 180 heat-related deaths in Washington and Oregon, including a worker, Sebastian Francisco Perez, who was found dead at a blueberry farm south of Portland.</p> <p>Yakima Valley farmworker Florencio Gueta Vargas also died in August while working in a hops field, and heat was ruled a contributing factor.</p> <p>Heat-related deaths are preventable, and climate change is exacerbating the dangers of outdoor work, said Elizabeth Strater, United Farm Workers director of strategic campaigns.</p> <p>“[Employers] should not just be given a financial penalty for them to listen when people are being pushed too far,” she said.</p> |

Heat-related mortality is 35 times higher among agricultural workers than in any other industry, according to a [systematic review](#) on the effects of climate change and heat stress on farmworkers.

The new heat rules, released Wednesday, build on existing protections demanding employers provide enough drinking water, at least a quart every hour for each outdoor employee, by specifying that water must be cool, according to L&I.

Employers will also be required to provide adequate, nearby shade for outdoor workers and give them a paid 10-minute cooldown break every two hours when temperatures reach 89 degrees.

The new rules will also require employers to monitor air temperatures, regularly check for signs of heat-related illness among workers and implement a peer check-in system or something similar to monitor for heat illness symptoms.

L&I also clarified that employers must encourage employees to take paid breaks to cool down as needed.

If a worker shows symptoms of heat-related illness, employers must ensure they stop working, provide them a way to cool down and determine whether they need medical attention.

Signs of heat-related illness include heat rashes, muscle cramps, headaches, excessive sweating, dizziness and confusion, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

Existing rules already require employers to train employees on outdoor heat exposure safety and appropriately respond to workers experiencing heat-related illness symptoms.

“These new rules are strong”

The United Farm Workers petitioned L&I to pass emergency heat rules this spring following the expiration of last year’s emergency rules, Strater said.

Growers in the tree fruit industry say most work stops when temperatures reach 90 degrees, so as to not damage the fruit. But UFW volunteers [who visited nearly 50 Yakima Valley worksites](#) in August noticed work continued amid higher temperatures — possibly violating some of last year’s emergency rules, which went into effect at 100 degrees.

“When you have these rules that are set freakishly high, like 100 degrees, that is where you’re going to start seeing employers that are going to roll the dice,” Strater said. “These new rules are strong, so I’m hopeful.”

Jon DeVaney, president of the Washington State Tree Fruit Association, said growers were given ample time to prepare for the changes brought on by this year’s emergency rules after being given only days to get ready for the 2021 protections.

He praised the variety of ways L&I will allow growers to check in with their workers, allowing the growers to make plans for their specific workplaces, though he cautioned that some rules that are recommended but not required could lead to confusion.

“It shouldn’t be an inconvenience for most growers” to implement, DeVaney said of the emergency rules. “We’d prefer to see these rules be hashed out and put in a permanent form so that everyone can understand them.”

Wildfire smoke rules

L&I’s wildfire smoke emergency rules will also go into effect June 15 and run through September, requiring employers to monitor air quality and take steps to protect workers from wildfire smoke, which contains fine particles that can reach the deepest parts of the lungs, causing serious health problems.

If the [Air Quality Index](#) hits 69 — when people sensitive to lower levels of particle pollution should [limit time outside and strenuous activity](#) — employers will be encouraged but not required to limit workers' exposure. They can do so by reducing hours, rescheduling work or relocating employees to an area with better air quality.

L&I also encourages employers to give workers access to enclosed buildings or vehicles where the air is filtered, provide free respirator masks for voluntary use, reduce work intensity or provide more breaks.

When the Air Quality Index reaches or exceeds 101 — when sensitive groups should limit their time outside and avoid strenuous outdoor activity — those suggestions will become mandatory “whenever feasible,” the agency said. While employers are required to provide respiratory masks, employees can choose whether or not to use them.

If particulates from wildfire smoke are measured at 555 micrograms per cubic meter or higher, a level that exceeds Air Quality Index measurement, workers will be required to wear employer-provided respirators that are NIOSH approved. Growers typically don't work in such conditions, which are rare, said L&I spokesperson Dina Lorraine.

The agency recommends that employers take steps to protect workers, especially those with asthma or lung conditions, even at lower Air Quality Index levels.

Employers are still required to train workers about the hazards of heat and wildfire smoke exposure, how employees can respond to potential exposure problems before working under those conditions, and what employees can do to mitigate the hazards.

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| HEADLINE | 06/03 'Unacceptable' SPD sexual assault staffing |
| SOURCE | https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/times-watchdog/seattle-mayor-bruce-harrell-says-police-sexual-assault-staffing-woes-case-backlog-unacceptable/ |
| GIST | <p>Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell said Thursday the Seattle Police Department's critically low staffing in its sexual assault unit was “unacceptable,” following an internal memo published by The Seattle Times and KUOW showing that it had stopped investigating most new sexual assault cases involving adults this year.</p> <p>Advocates and personnel within the department had raised concerns about these issues for months. In the wake of the story, advocates said they felt “gaslit” by public officials’ responses when they assured them they stood with survivors of sexual assault.</p> <p>Harrell rejected the idea that his administration did not prioritize justice for sexual assault survivors. But he acknowledged that the current state of the unit – and its backlog of 48 stalled cases that had not yet been investigated – was “not where it needs to be.”</p> <p>“I’m not happy with where the city is, but we will indeed make sure that we are providing optimal service, both for investigation and victim survivor support here this year,” Harrell said.</p> <p>Harrell suggested bringing back retired detectives to investigate sex offenses, but said he was limited by labor agreements. He also committed to a “sit down” with advocates in response to these concerns in coming weeks.</p> <p>Ultimately, Harrell said, he needed to increase staffing across the department.</p> <p>Advocates have questioned whether the root cause was staffing, or the department and city leaders’ priorities.</p> |

Riddhi Mukhopadhyay, executive director of Seattle nonprofit Sexual Violence Law Center, said advocates were “excited” to see the memo “because it confirms what we’ve all been seeing.”

“Now we are being gaslit,” Mukhopadhyay said of the response from political leaders. “[The Seattle police department’s] response has always been kind of slow and not as timely compared to other jurisdictions. But it’s gotten worse.”

The SPD memo published by The Times/KUOW was written by the Seattle police sexual assault and child abuse unit’s Sgt. Pamela St. John to interim chief Adrian Diaz this April. It explained that the unit was so understaffed it had a backlog of stalled sexual assault cases.

Where the sexual assault and child abuse unit had once been staffed with 10 to 12 detectives, just four detectives remained in the unit earlier this year.

The unit has since added an additional detective and plans to add another this month, but the understaffing continues to result in fewer referrals to prosecutors and can harm cases, prosecutors and advocates said.

Other city leaders declined interview requests about their roles in addressing the sexual assault unit’s current crisis. Councilmember Andrew Lewis, a former assistant Seattle city attorney, backed out of a scheduled interview Thursday. Councilmembers Teresa Mosqueda and Sara Nelson did not agree to interview requests; Councilmember Tammy Morales sent an emailed statement about the memo.

Hours after the memo was published, interim chief Adrian Diaz appeared on Dori Monson’s KIRO Radio 97.3 FM show and defended the department’s staffing.

He cited a decrease in the number of sexual assaults reported to Seattle police over the last two years and emphasized a “massive stress level on all of our units” because the department’s overall number of sworn officers in service plunged from 1,290 officers in 2020 to 968 as of March.

“We are trying to work through every case that comes to us, but some cases take a little bit longer for us to get to,” said Diaz.

Seattle City Council public safety and human services committee chair Lisa Herbold said in an interview Thursday she planned to ask Diaz how he believed the department could move toward investigating all sexual assault cases when many sexual assault reports had historically not been investigated.

Herbold said she agreed with Diaz’s explanation that departmentwide understaffing was at the root of problems plaguing the sexual assault unit. She also defended the council’s discussion of reducing police funding in the wake of the 2020 protests, saying that police departments across the country have now experienced similar labor shortages during the pandemic.

“This is why we’re looking for ways to support the department in meeting its hiring goals,” Herbold said.

Washington’s U.S. Sen. Patty Murray, who has championed efforts in Congress to expand sexual assault survivors’ access to rape kits and sexual assault nurses, said in an emailed statement to the Times/KUOW it is “unacceptable for any survivor not to have their case investigated and pursued.”

“No one should ever have to bring their story to the police only to discover that their assault will go uninvestigated and unheard by law enforcement — survivors deserve justice,” she said.

Assistant Chief Deanna Nollette said in an interview last week that staffing shortages have been felt throughout the police department, but data provided to the Seattle City Council shows that among an

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| | <p>overall staff decline, the proportion of officers in some units – including patrol and management – increased as the portion in investigative units decreased.</p> <p>In the interview Thursday evening, Harrell said his focus on the stalled investigations was “not a result of external pressure or anything else. It is just the right thing to do.”</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/03 Boeing slows 737 MAX production |
| SOURCE | https://www.seattletimes.com/business/boeing-aerospace/supply-chain-issues-slowng-boeing-737-max-production/ |
| GIST | <p>Delays in the supply of parts are causing a slowdown in production of the 737 MAX in Renton, impeding Boeing’s push toward a target rate of building 31 of the jets per month.</p> <p>To try to stabilize production, Boeing is handling the issue differently than in the past. Instead of rolling unfinished planes through the assembly line and out onto the field where the missing parts can be installed later, it’s pausing the jets on the moving line.</p> <p>A person familiar with the current production status said Friday that for a period of roughly 10 days last month, airplanes were held in position on the moving line awaiting delivery of parts missing because of supply chain issues.</p> <p>The person said production work did not stop, but continued in various sections of the airplanes during these pauses on the moving line.</p> <p>In a statement Friday, Boeing said “production activities in Renton have continued and are ongoing.” “As we have said, we are driving stability in our factory and would rather perform work in their designated position rather than pass that work onto the next position,” Boeing added.</p> <p>In the past, Boeing has typically not let delays in delivery of even major parts hold back the pace of its moving lines. Instead, it installed those parts after the rest of the plane was complete and had rolled out of the factory.</p> <p>This is known as “traveled work,” since the work travels from the factory out to the field. However, too much traveled work creates chaos because installation of the parts must be completed out of the normal sequence, resulting in some disassembly and rework.</p> <p>In the summer and fall of 2018, a pile up of traveled work due to late delivery of engines and fuselages resulted in dozens of airplanes being worked on in the field. As overworked employees tried to maintain the delivery schedule, quality issues proliferated.</p> <p>Ed Pierson, a production manager there at that time, became so concerned at the danger posed that he sent an email to the executive in charge of Renton stating that for the first time in his life he was “hesitant about putting my family on a Boeing airplane.”</p> <p>Pierson was ignored then. Now, Boeing may have taken heed and wants to avoid similar chaos this time.</p> <p>The 10-day pause in the moving line in May was first reported Friday by The Wall Street Journal.</p> <p>Speaking at a Goldman Sachs conference on May 11, Boeing Chief Financial Officer Brian West, noted then that “one particular wiring connector ... has us slowing things down.”</p> <p>“It’s a reflection of a crazy supply chain world that we live in right now. But I will tell you that we slowed it down deliberately,” West said. “We can’t go back to a world where we are traveling lots of work. We have to stay disciplined, and we have to drive stability.”</p> |

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| | <p>To achieve stability, he said Boeing is “willing to slow things down, or in some cases, just pause if all the parts aren’t there.”</p> <p>Complicating matters, Boeing still has 240 of 450 MAXs that were built and then grounded following a second crash, in Ethiopia in March 2019, parked around the region that haven’t yet been reworked and delivered.</p> <p>Speaking early Friday at a Bernstein Conference, Boeing CEO Dave Calhoun said Boeing is still working toward a stable target rate of 31 jets per month.</p> <p>He added that the MAX “is still the most labor and human resource consuming recovery that we have.”</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/03 Largest single sale US urban forest credits |
| SOURCE | https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/environment/blockchain-company-buys-1m-in-carbon-credits-generated-by-issaquah-forest-biggest-such-deal-in-u-s/ |
| GIST | <p>King County announced Friday that Regen Network Development, a Delaware-based blockchain software development company, bought \$1 million in carbon credits generated by a 46-acre forest in Issaquah.</p> <p>The deal is being hailed as the largest single sale of urban forest credits in U.S. history. The money earned will be used by the county, the city of Issaquah and the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust, among others, to further protect and conserve urban forests, according to the county.</p> <p>“Our region is now part of the largest sale of urban forest carbon credits in U.S. history, thanks to partnerships among King County, cities and nonprofits,” King County Executive Dow Constantine said in a news release. “We will steward the newly protected urban forests so they can continue to absorb carbon, contribute to cleaner air and water, and create more greenspace where people, families, and communities can gather.”</p> <p>The county and city purchased the forested property in 2018. The county’s portion was added to Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park while the city’s slice was renamed Harvey Manning Park Expansion Area.</p> <p>The sale announced this week was overseen by City Forest Credits, a Seattle nonprofit that manages a carbon registry in several metropolitan areas.</p> <p>The money generated by the sale of the carbon credits will help fund forest management programs like the King County Forest Carbon Program, which is part of the county’s Land Conservation Initiative, an effort to protect existing tree canopies as well as build more parks, trails and public spaces.</p> <p>CFC issued the credits purchased by Regen Network Development in the deal announced Friday. RND will most likely sell those credits to other buyers.</p> <p>Emission-offset schemes have presented forest carbon credits as an attractive means for individuals, companies and governments to negate or neutralize the burning of fossil fuels by investing in the natural ability of trees, plants and soil to sequester carbon, or in projects that fund the conservation, protection or regeneration of natural systems.</p> <p>King County became the first local government in the country to offer forest carbon offsets in May 2019. In the first five years of the program, the county vowed to preserve more than 100,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide that would have been released into the atmosphere were it not for the county’s protection. Microsoft became its first local customer when the company agreed to buy all credits from the program’s first year.</p> |

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| | <p>“You know, we’re new to all of this,” said King County Forest Carbon Program Manager Kathleen Wolf.</p> <p>That project and the 46-acre plot in Issaquah are two of the largest carbon offset projects overseen by King County.</p> <p>“Between the two, we’ve been on a really steep learning curve as well, just trying to better understand what it takes to get these projects up and running, how the sale of credits can help us make connections with, in particular, local buyers who then become participants,” Wolf said.</p> <p>Carbon credits and emission offsets can be fascinating but nauseatingly complex. Still, she was able to boil it down to a workable mantra.</p> <p>“Protect forest. Generate the credits. Sell those. Use that funding to protect more forest.”</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/03 SPU students continue sit-in protest |
| SOURCE | https://www.seattletimes.com/education/lab/seattle-pacific-university-students-continue-sit-in-over-anti-lgbtq-policy-want-trustees-to-resign/ |
| GIST | <p>Friday marked the 10th full day of an ongoing sit-in protest at Seattle Pacific University, where a group of students, staff and alumni are pressuring the school’s board of trustees to reverse course on an employment policy that discriminates against LGBTQ+ people.</p> <p>Students say they plan to continue the sit-in until their demands are met — but so far the board hasn’t budged, leaving few options for those who want to see the change.</p> <p>Laur Lugos is the student government president at SPU, and is helping organize the sit-in, taking place in the campus administration building, Demaray Hall. They plan to be there for as long as it takes, even after the school year ends, if necessary. Lugos said hundreds of people are signing up for shifts every few days.</p> <p>“Students have organized it and have been the ones putting it together, but the entire community is backing this and supporting this,” Lugos said.</p> <p>Lugos said that staff and alumni have signed up to participate, with some traveling from miles away to take on shifts. Others have pledged to withhold donations and other financial support from the school until the policy is changed.</p> <p>The ongoing protest comes after the SPU board of trustees voted in late May to uphold the school’s “Employee Lifestyle Expectations” policy that prohibits full-time staff from participating in “same-sex sexual activity,” among other things. Pushback against the policy has been ongoing, with LGBTQ+ activists, advocates and allies on campus turning up the pressure in recent months.</p> <p>Last year, the SPU Faculty Senate passed a vote of no confidence in the board after trustees elected to uphold the policy. That decision came after an adjunct nursing professor sued the school, alleging leaders denied him a promotion because he’s gay. School leaders then created a work group to explore how to make the campus more welcoming for LGBTQ+ people. The group ultimately recommended the board get rid of the rule this spring — a recommendation the board subsequently rejected.</p> <p>Ahead of the trustees meeting last month, the school’s church affiliate, Free Methodist Church USA, warned that should the school remove its “Employee Lifestyle Expectations,” it would lose its church affiliation. But the church doesn’t have any legal oversight or ownership over the school or its property — the governance of the school lies exclusively with the trustees.</p> |

Inside Higher Ed co-founder and editor Scott Jaschik said the way private religious schools navigate policies for LGBTQ+ folks on campus is a major national issue, but varies across different religions or denominations. For example, he said, Catholic colleges generally don't prohibit all full-time faculty or staff from being in same-sex marriages, though they may have some restrictions for those who work in theology departments or other areas of study directly related to religious teachings.

"They believe what they believe, but they do not have an across-the-board enforcement of this kind of rule," he said. "It tends to be the Southern Baptist colleges where you hear about something like this."

Jaschik added that private religious schools don't really get much funding from their church affiliates either. According to an SPU spokesperson, the Free Methodist has provided \$324,000 in financial support to the school "through its various entities" over the past 40 years.

SPU protesters have three demands: first, for the board to reveal how each trustee voted on the employment policy last month; second, for members who voted against keeping the policy to condemn those who voted to uphold it; and third, for board members who voted in favor of keeping it to resign.

But with the trustees in control of school governance, those who want to see change have limited options if the board decides to ignore their demands.

Still, Lugos doesn't see the momentum behind the protest fading any time soon. She said that those making the demands are working on filing a lawsuit against the trustees. An online fundraiser posted earlier in the week has received more than \$20,000 in donations to support the effort, as of Friday afternoon.

Jaschik said it might be difficult to successfully challenge the trustees in court — there are plenty of schools similar to SPU.

"I don't know what they'll do ... but that's a hard road to go down," he said.

So far, two board members have resigned in the midst of the controversy, with a third leaving after completing his most recent term. Board Chair Cedric Davis resigned from the board May 26, shortly after the sit-in began, and board member Denise Martinez resigned on May 19, the same week of the board's vote. Board member Kevin Johnson finished out his three-year term on May 20.

Davis and Martinez's motivations for resigning remain unclear; neither could be reached for comment. But Lugos worries about the changes, since the trustees who have left are likely the ones who support changing the school's employee policy.

"It's really frustrating and disheartening," Lugos said. "What we want to do is to get the homophobic board members to resign."

Meanwhile, the Faculty Senate voted Friday on a resolution that would formalize faculty support for the work group's recommendations and disagreement with the board's decision, as well as a desire to seek out other potential church partners. The results are expected to be made public next week.

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Cyber Awareness

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| HEADLINE | 06/06 Binance as hub for hackers, fraudsters |
| SOURCE | https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/fintech-crypto-binance-dirtymoney/ |
| GIST | In September 2020, a North Korean hacking group known as Lazarus broke into a small Slovakian crypto exchange and stole virtual currency worth some \$5.4 million. It was one of a string of cyber heists by Lazarus that Washington said were aimed at funding North Korea's nuclear weapons programme. |

Several hours later, the hackers opened at least two dozen anonymous accounts on Binance, the world's largest cryptocurrency exchange, enabling them to convert the stolen funds and obscure the money trail, correspondence between Slovakia's national police and Binance reveals.

In as little as nine minutes, using only encrypted email addresses as identification, the Lazarus hackers created Binance accounts and traded crypto stolen from Eterbase, the Slovakian exchange, according to account records that Binance shared with the police and that are reported here for the first time.

"Binance had no idea who was moving money through their exchange" because of the anonymous nature of the accounts, said Eterbase co-founder Robert Auxt, whose firm has been unable to locate or recover the funds.

Eterbase's lost money is part of a torrent of illicit funds that flowed through Binance from 2017 to 2021, a Reuters investigation has found.

During this period, Binance processed transactions totalling at least \$2.35 billion stemming from hacks, investment frauds and illegal drug sales, Reuters calculated from an examination of court records, statements by law enforcement and blockchain data, compiled for the news agency by two blockchain analysis firms. Two industry experts reviewed the calculation and agreed with the estimate.

Separately, crypto researcher Chainalysis, hired by U.S. government agencies to track illegal flows, concluded in a 2020 report that Binance received criminal funds totalling \$770 million in 2019 alone, more than any other crypto exchange. Binance CEO Changpeng Zhao accused Chainalysis on Twitter of "bad business etiquette."

Binance declined to make Zhao available for an interview. Responding to written questions, Chief Communications Officer Patrick Hillmann said Binance did not consider Reuters' calculation to be accurate. He did not respond to requests to provide Binance's own figures for the cases identified in this article. He said Binance was building "the most sophisticated cyber forensics team on the planet" and was seeking to "further improve our ability to detect illegal crypto activity on our platform."

As [Reuters reported](#) in January, Binance kept weak money-laundering checks on its users until mid-2021, despite concerns raised by senior company figures starting at least three years earlier. In response to that article, Binance said it was helping drive higher industry standards and the reporting was "wildly outdated." In August 2021, Binance compelled new and existing users to submit identification.

With around 120 million users worldwide, Binance processes crypto trades worth hundreds of billions of dollars a month. The sector was hit by a sharp correction in May, its overall value slumping by a quarter to \$1.3 trillion. Zhao said he saw "new found resiliency" in the market.

Meanwhile, his company is extending its reach into traditional business, announcing a \$200 million investment in media group Forbes this year and committing \$500 million to Tesla boss Elon Musk's bid to take over Twitter. A Forbes spokesperson declined to comment. Musk didn't respond to requests for comment.

The flow of illicit crypto through Binance, identified by Reuters, represents a small portion of the exchange's overall trading volumes. Yet as policymakers and regulators, including U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde, voice concern over the illegal use of cryptocurrencies, the trade demonstrates how criminals have turned to the technology to launder dirty money.

For this article, Reuters interviewed law enforcement officials, researchers, and crime victims in a dozen countries, including in Europe and the United States, to assess the enduring impact of past gaps in Binance's anti-money laundering rules.

Reuters reviewed detailed data about Binance client transactions on “darknet” sites – marketplaces for narcotics, weapons and other illegal items. Most of the data was provided by Crystal Blockchain, an Amsterdam-based analysis firm that helps companies and governments trace crypto funds. The data showed that from 2017 to 2022, buyers and sellers on the world’s largest darknet drugs market, a Russian-language site called Hydra, used Binance to make and receive crypto payments worth \$780 million. Reuters cross-checked these figures with another analysis firm, which agreed with the findings.

In April, the U.S. Justice Department announced that U.S. and German law enforcement had seized Hydra’s servers. The U.S. indicted the servers’ alleged administrator for conspiring to commit money laundering and distribute illicit drugs. The site was closed down and the alleged administrator arrested by Russian authorities.

The data compiled for Reuters included crypto that passed through multiple digital wallets before reaching Binance. For crypto firms, such “indirect” flows with links to known suspicious sources are red flags for money laundering, according to the Financial Action Task Force, a global watchdog that sets standards for authorities combating financial crime. Money launderers often use sophisticated techniques to create complex chains of crypto transfers that cover their tracks, the FATF and the International Monetary Fund have said.

Hillmann, the Binance spokesperson, said the Hydra figure was “inaccurate and overblown” and that Reuters was wrongly including indirect flows in its calculation.

Reuters then asked how Binance views its responsibility to monitor its indirect exposure to dirty money. Hillmann replied that “what’s important to note is not where the funds come from - as crypto deposits cannot be blocked - but what we do after the funds are deposited.” He said Binance uses transaction monitoring and risk assessments to “ensure that any illegal funds are tracked, frozen, recovered and/or returned to their rightful owner.” Binance is working closely with law enforcement to dismantle criminal networks using cryptocurrencies, including in Russia, he said.

Reuters reviewed documentation from criminal and civil cases. A still open civil case in the United States alleges that in 2020 Binance declined a request from investigators and lawyers, acting on behalf of a hacking victim, to permanently freeze an account that was being used to launder stolen funds. Binance, which disputes the U.S. court’s jurisdiction, confirmed to Reuters that it only put a temporary freeze on the account. Hillmann blamed a failure by law enforcement to submit a timely request via Binance’s web portal and then answer the exchange’s follow-up questions.

In Germany, police said investigators began seeing criminals in Europe turn to Binance in 2020 to launder some of the proceeds from investment fraud schemes that caused victims, many of them pensioners, to lose in total 750 million euros (\$800 million). The criminals’ use of Binance has not been previously reported.

Reuters reporting also reveals for the first time how North Korea’s Lazarus used Binance to launder some of the cryptocurrency stolen from Eterbase. A smaller portion of the funds were laundered at the same time through another major exchange, Seychelles-based Huobi, which declined to comment.

After another heist in March this year, when Lazarus stole over \$600 million from an online game involving cryptocurrencies, Zhao said North Korean hackers had transferred an unspecified amount of the funds to Binance. Hillmann told Reuters that Binance has identified and frozen more than \$5 million and is assisting law enforcement with its investigation. He didn’t provide further details.

The United States sanctioned Lazarus in 2019 over cyber attacks designed to support North Korea’s weapons programmes, calling it an instrument of the country’s intelligence service – an accusation Pyongyang called “vicious slander.” North Korea’s mission to the United Nations did not respond to emailed questions. Blockchain researcher Chainalysis estimates that Lazarus stole crypto worth \$1.75 billion by 2020 that mostly flowed through unidentified exchanges.

“The Hydra is thriving”

Zhao, known as CZ, started Binance in Shanghai in 2017. Three months later, he unveiled a new strategy, on an internal chat group, for the company’s next phase of development. “Do everything to increase our market share, and nothing else,” Zhao wrote.

The priority, he said, was to ensure Binance overtook larger cryptocurrency exchanges and fended off competition from smaller rivals. “Profit, revenue, comfort, etc, all come second.”

Asked to elaborate on this remark, Hillmann said, “Neither CZ nor any other Binance business leader has ever suggested that increasing market share should supersede compliance obligations.”

Among the countries Zhao sought to expand in was Russia, which Binance described in a 2018 blog as a major market due to its “hyperactive” crypto community. A [Reuters article](#) in April detailed Binance’s efforts to dominate the crypto market there and how, behind the scenes, the exchange was building ties with Russian government agencies.

Binance has continued to provide limited services in Russia since the country’s invasion of Ukraine this year, despite requests from the government in Kyiv for exchanges to ban Russian users as part of efforts to isolate Russia financially. Russia calls its actions in Ukraine a “special operation.”

Reuters’ new reporting following the April article shows that many people who signed up to Binance in Russia weren’t using it for trading. Instead, Binance became a key payment provider for Hydra, the giant darknet marketplace, according to the blockchain data compiled for Reuters, a review of Hydra user forums, and interviews with illegal drug users and researchers.

After it was set up in 2015, Hydra distributed narcotics on behalf of drug dealers, all priced in bitcoin, to millions of buyers, mostly in Russia.

German police, in coordination with U.S. authorities, seized Hydra’s servers in Germany in April, closing the site down. The U.S. indicted a Russian resident, Dmitry Pavlov, for administering the servers. A week later, Russian authorities arrested Pavlov for allegedly dealing in drugs, a Moscow court said, adding he had filed an appeal. Before his arrest, Pavlov told the BBC he ran a licensed server company and was not aware it was hosting Hydra. Pavlov didn’t respond to messages from Reuters sent via his company.

The Justice Department, describing Hydra as “the world’s largest and longest-running darknet market,” said the site had received in total around \$5.2 billion in cryptocurrency. Neither Binance nor any other payment provider linked to Hydra was named by the Justice Department, which declined to comment on Binance.

Hillmann told Reuters that Binance “works closely with law enforcement to target the illicit drug trade daily.”

Sites like Hydra are only accessible on a clandestine part of the internet, known as the dark web, that requires a browser that hides a user’s identity.

As early as March 2018, Hydra users recommended on the site’s Russian-language forums that buyers use Binance to make purchases, citing the anonymity Binance afforded its clients at the time by allowing them to register with just an email address. “This is the fastest and cheapest way I’ve tried,” a user wrote.

Cryptocurrency traders exchanged dozens of messages in 2021 and early 2022 about using Hydra on Binance’s own Russian community Telegram chat. “The Hydra is thriving,” wrote one last year.

Hydra transformed the narcotics market in Russia, researchers said. Previously, drug users tended to buy from street dealers with cash. With Hydra, users selected substances on the site, paid the seller in bitcoin, and received coordinates to pick up the “treasure” at a discreet location. Buyers, known as “treasure

hunters,” found their purchases buried in forests at the edge of town, hidden in garbage dumps, or stuffed behind loose bricks in abandoned buildings.

According to a report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Hydra increased the availability of drugs in Russia and drove a surge in demand for stimulants, such as methamphetamine and mephedrone. Drug-related deaths rose by two-thirds between 2018 and 2020, figures from Russia’s state anti-drug committee show.

At the time of the U.S. and German operation to seize Hydra’s servers, the Drug Enforcement Administration, which supported the investigation, said the marketplace’s services “threaten the safety and health of communities far and wide.” The DEA referred Reuters to the Justice Department for further comment.

Aleksey Lakhov, a director at Russian charity foundation Humanitarian Action, which researches drug use, said he was “horrificed” by how Hydra fuelled addiction. “During the days I used drugs, you had to know someone at least” in order to obtain narcotics, Lakhov, a recovered addict, added.

Alexandra, a 24-year-old office manager in Moscow, started buying mephedrone and ketamine on Hydra in 2019 to help cope with her bipolar disorder. Several friends who used Hydra told her Binance was the safest way to pay dealers, Alexandra told Reuters, speaking on condition she be identified only with her first name. Some of them used fake personal information to open Binance accounts, she said, but she uploaded a copy of her passport. Binance never blocked or queried any of her payments. Asked about her account, Binance said it was continually strengthening its know-your-customer capabilities.

The system’s anonymity made it easy to buy drugs on the darknet, Alexandra said. “It was like buying chocolate in the store.”

As her drug use became an everyday habit, she went days without sleep, wracked by hallucinations and depression. “I felt like I was dying, and I liked that feeling,” she said. Eventually, she sought psychiatric help and received therapy. Since then, she just used Hydra to buy cannabis.

State Department reports from 2019 and 2020, without mentioning Hydra or Binance, warned that drug traffickers in Russia were using virtual currencies to launder proceeds. A State Department spokesman declined to comment on Hydra and Binance.

As reported by Reuters in its January investigation, an internal document shows that Binance was aware of the risk of illegal finance in Russia. Binance’s compliance department assigned Russia an “extreme” risk rating in 2020 in an assessment that was reviewed by Reuters. It cited money-laundering reports by the U.S. State Department. Hillmann told Reuters Binance had taken more action against Russian money launderers than any other crypto exchange, citing a ban it imposed on three Russian digital currency platforms that were sanctioned by the United States.

Crypto flows between Binance and Hydra dropped sharply after the exchange tightened its customer checks in August 2021, the data from Crystal Blockchain shows.

“Financial freedom”

For the past five years, Binance has allowed traders on its platform to buy and sell a coin called Monero, a cryptocurrency that offers users anonymity. While bitcoin transactions are recorded on a public blockchain, Monero obscures the digital addresses of senders and receivers. A Beginner’s Guide to Monero by Binance, available on its website, said such coins were “desirable for those seeking true financial confidentiality.”

Zhao has spoken in favour of “privacy coins,” of which Monero is the most traded. During a 2020 video call with staff, a recording of which Reuters reviewed, Zhao said privacy was part of people’s “financial freedom.” He didn’t mention Monero, but said Binance had funded other privacy coin projects.

Monero proved to be popular among Binance users. As of late May, Binance was processing Monero trades worth around \$50 million a day, far more than other exchanges, according to data from the CoinMarketCap website.

Law enforcement agencies in Europe and the United States have warned that Monero's anonymity makes it a potential tool for money launderers. The U.S. Department of Justice, in a 2020 report, said it considered the use of "anonymity enhanced cryptocurrencies" like Monero "a high-risk activity that is indicative of possible criminal conduct."

On several darknet forums that Reuters reviewed, over 20 users wrote about buying Monero on Binance to purchase illegal drugs. They shared how-to guides with names like DNM Bible, a reference to darknet markets.

"XMR is essential to anyone buying drugs on the Dark web," wrote one user on the forum Dread, referring to Monero's ticker symbol. It isn't possible to contact users through the forum so Reuters was unable to reach these people for comment.

Hillmann told Reuters there were "many legitimate reasons why users require privacy," such as when opposition groups in authoritarian regimes are denied safe access to funds. Binance opposed anyone using crypto to buy or sell illegal drugs, he said.

Hackers have used Binance to convert stolen funds into Monero.

In August 2020, hackers hijacked a cryptocurrency wallet belonging to an Australian man named Steve Kowalski by tricking him into downloading malware, Kowalski said in a witness statement to Australian police. They withdrew the 1,400 bitcoin he held in the wallet, worth some \$16 million at the time. Kowalski told police he had bought the bitcoin for \$500,000 six years earlier and they were a significant portion of his assets.

Investigators hired by Kowalski traced most of his bitcoin through a series of wallets to six Binance accounts, where the coins were exchanged for Monero, according to testimony and blockchain analysis reports filed as part of an ongoing civil complaint Kowalski submitted last year against Binance in Miami-Dade County, Florida. Kowalski declined to comment.

Kowalski's investigation showed that a U.S. software consultant called Brandon Ng, then living in Florida, controlled most of the Binance accounts. Ng testified to the court that a crypto trading partner, who he knew online only by the username MoneyTree, deposited the bitcoin in his Binance accounts. MoneyTree, Ng said, paid him a 1% commission to convert the bitcoin into Monero on Binance and then transfer it back. A lawyer for Ng, Spencer Silvergate, said MoneyTree likely traded through Ng to shield his identity from Binance. Ng testified that he was not aware he was laundering stolen bitcoin.

MoneyTree did not respond to emails sent by Reuters to an address that Ng provided to the court. Silvergate, the lawyer, said Ng did not steal or launder Kowalski's bitcoin and was an "innocent downstream trader."

Ng's Monero trading had earlier raised alarms at another crypto exchange called Poloniex, based in the United States, where he also had an account. In mid-2019, his Poloniex account was frozen after it was flagged for "high risk exposure" to money laundering due to Monero withdrawals totalling over \$1 million, according to a summary filed with the court. Poloniex didn't respond to a request for comment.

Binance dealt with Ng differently. Kowalski's private investigators and lawyers contacted Binance soon after the theft, before Ng converted all the funds, and repeatedly asked Binance to permanently freeze Ng's accounts, their written communications show. The letters, filed with the court, also accuse Binance of not responding to police requests to secure the assets for the duration of their investigation.

Binance imposed a seven-day freeze on the accounts, but then lifted it, allowing Ng to exchange the stolen bitcoin for Monero over several months. In his response to Reuters, Hillmann said law enforcement failed to request a permanent freeze via Binance's web portal within the seven-day period and then didn't answer the exchange's follow-up questions.

A Binance investigation team member told one of the private investigators in a message that "while it is highly likely the paths leading to this account are malicious," Binance could not prove the accounts were "created to facilitate laundering." When the investigator persisted, the team member scolded him for "several issues with your tone."

In a submission last December to the court in Florida, Binance said the case should be dismissed as the court did not have jurisdiction over the company. To determine the matter, the judge has granted discovery, a process where parties request documents from each other.

Hillmann told Reuters that Binance investigates all allegations of misconduct on its platform and takes appropriate action if its investigators uncover wrongdoing.

Eterbase, the Bratislava-based exchange hacked by the North Koreans, sought Binance's help, too.

After news of the hack by Lazarus, Zhao tweeted on Sept. 9, 2020: "Will do what we can to assist." But when Eterbase emailed Binance's support centre, a Binance team member said they could not share any account data without a law enforcement request, according to communications between the two firms seen by Reuters.

Eterbase submitted a criminal complaint to Slovakia's National Crime Agency. In June, 2021, the agency wrote to Binance requesting information and saying the funds were stolen by "anonymous attackers united under the Lazarus hacking group." Binance replied that it could not identify accounts connected to the hack. In July, after another, more detailed police request, Binance sent the agency records on 24 accounts, adding they had been empty for over nine months as "the assets have instantly been traded."

Hillmann said Binance fully cooperated with requests received from Slovakian authorities and helped them to identify the relevant accounts.

The records, reviewed by Reuters, showed the only personal information Binance held on the account holders was their email addresses, many of which were based on misspelt well-known names, such as "bejaminfranklin," the American founding father, and "garathbale," the Welsh soccer player. The hackers used virtual private networks to obscure their devices' locations, the records show.

Within around 20 minutes of opening most of the accounts, the hackers passed an unspecified "security check" allowing them to withdraw crypto, according to the account records. Each account then converted portions of the stolen funds into just under two bitcoin, the withdrawal limit at the time for a basic account without identification.

After the hack, Eterbase stopped its operations and later filed for bankruptcy. Auxt, the company co-founder, said the losses meant Eterbase could no longer cover its expenses. "The hack killed our business," he said. Victims of the hack are yet to be reimbursed.

"Black hole"

In private, Zhao has bemoaned that Binance needs to carry out checks on its customers. During the 2020 video call, Zhao told staff that know-your-customer rules were "unfortunately a requirement" of Binance's business.

At times, the compliance team struggled with its workload. In a message to staff in January 2019, Zhao asked other departments to help the compliance team run background checks due to an "overwhelming" number of new users.

According to a group chat among Binance staff, the compliance team sometimes approved accounts with inadequate documentation. A team member complained to colleagues that one user was able to open an account by submitting three copies of the same receipt from a meal at an Indian restaurant. Hillmann said Binance's know-your-customer checks are now "highly sophisticated" and that it views such rules as both "mandatory and welcome."

Current and former police officials in five countries told Reuters that criminal groups were among Binance's growing customer base in recent years.

In late 2019, Konrad Alber, a retired family lawyer in Germany, invested most of his savings on a trading platform he found online. He told Reuters he hoped it would supplement his small pension and allow his wife to stop working to support their life in a village in the Black Forest.

The platform, called Grandefex, promised to "unleash" his money's potential through a sophisticated algorithm. In an email, a sales representative told Alber, who had little investing experience, that he could double any deposits within a year. Over 18 months, he wired almost 35,000 euros to Grandefex's bank accounts.

Then, last June, when he asked Grandefex to pay him his expected profits, he discovered his money had been transferred to Binance, emails and bank account records show. Alber begged Grandefex by email to return his funds, telling their finance department he had a "mountain of debt" and was suffering a "nervous breakdown."

In response, Grandefex told him, "You will simply not receive your money."

Reuters' emails and calls to Grandefex went unanswered. In June 2020, Germany's regulator said the platform was unauthorised and ordered its closure.

Grandefex was one of a string of fake trading websites set up by organised crime groups that have scammed some 750 million euros from European citizens, many of them pensioners, according to German, Austrian and Spanish authorities. Six people involved in police investigations into the scams told Reuters that the groups, which operate call centres in Eastern Europe, have shifted to laundering their gains through crypto exchanges, particularly Binance.

Hillmann said Binance is tackling investment fraud by identifying victims and suspects, and whenever possible, freezing criminal proceeds.

A Vienna-based non-profit organisation, the European Funds Recovery Initiative, which supports victims of investment fraud, has received around 220 complaints from people whose stolen savings were converted into crypto. Almost two-thirds lost money that was funnelled through Binance, totalling 7.4 million euros, said the initiative's co-founder, Elfi Sixt. Other investment frauds targeting people in Turkey, Britain and Pakistan also used Binance, authorities have said.

Police officers and lawyers told Reuters that it is harder for fraud victims to recover lost funds when they pass through a crypto exchange. In many countries, consumers can ask their banks to freeze or reimburse stolen funds. Binance requires victims to sign non-disclosure agreements as a condition for temporarily freezing assets and insists on the direct involvement of law enforcement to process claims, according to its website.

Sixt said she has followed this process to no avail. "I've never succeeded at getting money back from Binance." Asked about this, Hillmann didn't directly respond.

Alber, the retired lawyer, sent a letter to Binance, but said he never heard back. In June 2021, the 67-year-old reported the theft of his savings and their transfer to Binance to local police. The prosecutor's office in the nearby town of Baden-Baden said his case remains under investigation. Binance said it had no record of Alber's letter.

At a police station in the Lower Saxony city of Braunschweig, the state cyber crime unit is investigating a similar scam that used Binance. Chief Inspector Mario Krause, two of his investigators and the prosecutor leading the probe detailed the case to Reuters.

Last October, the unit coordinated with Bulgarian authorities to raid a call centre in the capital Sofia, which police said ran hundreds of fake online trading platforms.

They obtained evidence, reviewed by Reuters, including a database showing the operators had taken in deposits totalling 94 million euros. Videos police seized from an employee's phone depicted what Krause described as a "Wolf of Wall Street" atmosphere at the call centre. Staff rang gongs and popped champagne bottles when they secured big deposits. A scoreboard showed which employee had raked in the most money each week. They partied on yachts and private jets.

In a statement at the time of the raid, the prosecutor's office said one suspect was arrested. The case prosecutor, Manuel Recha, told Reuters the organisation's leaders are still at large. The company that ran the call centre, Dortome BG, did not respond to requests to comment.

During the investigation, the cyber unit sought to trace where the stolen funds ended up.

Investigators tracked the money through many layers of bank accounts to Binance and another exchange, U.S.-based Kraken, police said. By the time Binance and Kraken provided account records, the police said the funds had been withdrawn or sent to a "mixer," a service which anonymises crypto transactions by breaking them up and mixing them with other funds. The personal information held by both exchanges on the accounts was often fake or stolen from victims, the officers said.

Kraken told Reuters it has "bank-grade" customer checks and robust tools to prevent fraud. Kraken disputed that customer information provided to Braunschweig police was fake, saying "every indicator we have suggests these accounts were used by legitimate clients."

The Germans' money trail went cold.

Krause said his team was struggling to make progress. "We're searching for a way out of the black hole," he said.

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| HEADLINE | 06/03 CISA advisory Dominion vulnerability |
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| SOURCE | https://www.cyberscoop.com/dominion-vulnerability-cisa-advisory-2020/ |
| GIST | <p>Vulnerabilities within some Dominion voting machines used in roughly a dozen states should be mitigated "as soon as possible," the U.S. government's top cybersecurity officials said in advisory issued Friday afternoon.</p> <p>The Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency advisory notes that while the technical flaws notes that while the technical flaws within the Dominion Voting Systems Democracy Suite ImageCast X — an in-person voting system that allows voters to mark their ballots — should be "mitigated as soon as possible, CISA has no evidence that these vulnerabilities have been exploited in any elections."</p> <p>Attackers looking to exploit the identified vulnerabilities "would require physical access to individual ImageCast X devices, access to the Election Management System (EMS), or the ability to modify files before they are uploaded" to the devices, the advisory reads, giving some experts doubt as to the real-world applicability of the concerns.</p> <p>The advisory included a slate of recommended mitigations, such as ensuring software and firmware updates are made, physical protection of machines at all times and ensuring that the machines are not connected to any external internet networks.</p> |

“Many of these mitigations are already typically standard practice in jurisdictions where these devices are in use and can be enhanced to further guard against exploitation of these vulnerabilities,” the statement read.

[CISA Director Jen Easterly tweeted](#) that the mitigations, if in place, would make it “very unlikely that a malicious actor could exploit these vulnerabilities to affect an election.”

The CISA advisory comes after it reviewed the machines in response to research conducted by election security experts as part of long-running litigation over Georgia’s voting system, [The Washington Post reported May 28](#).

A report produced by University of Michigan professor J. Alex Halderman, who served as an expert for the plaintiffs arguing that the systems are insecure, was part of the basis for the CISA review. Halderman [explained in a series of tweets Friday](#) that CISA’s review examined nine vulnerabilities he and another researcher submitted to CISA in February.

Dominion [told CNN Friday](#) that its machines “are accurate and secure,” and that “the issues raised in the advisory are limited to ballot marking devices, not vote tabulators.”

A separate analysis of Georgia’s voting system, conducted by the federally funded Mitre Corp. and also not-yet-public, affirmed that “existing procedural safeguards make it extremely unlikely for any bad actor to actually exploit any vulnerabilities,” Georgia Deputy Secretary of State Gabriel Sterling told CNN.

Dominion has been at the center of fervent conspiracy theories pushed by former President Donald Trump and his supporters who baselessly assert that the 2020 election suffered widespread fraud enabled, in part, by malicious manipulation of Dominion voting equipment. Denver-based Dominion has filed [multiple lawsuits](#) related to the claims, including defamation lawsuits against Trump attorneys Rudy Giuliani and Sidney Powell.

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| HEADLINE | 06/03 ‘Solver Bots’ bypass bot detection services |
| SOURCE | https://www.scmagazine.com/news/cloud-security/solver-bots-let-threat-actors-bypass-the-majority-of-bot-management-systems |
| GIST | <p>Kasada on Friday reported on a new type of bot — Solver Services — API-as-a-Service tools created by bad actors to bypass the majority of bot management systems.</p> <p>These “Solver Bots” are giving security teams concern because by “solving” a bot detection system’s defenses, cybercriminals can now commercialize the solver services they deciphered and sell it at scale for a profit. Threat actors with little or no technical skills can now conduct automated bot attacks without having to worry about what bot defenses a site may have in place.</p> <p>Kasada reports that in the last 12 months, there’s been more than a 750% increase in Solver Bots used for log-in abuse/account takeover within e-commerce. Some 12 months ago, less than 10% of e-commerce bad bot traffic were solver bots. Now, Solver Bots make up more than 95% of e-commerce bot traffic.</p> <p>“For digital businesses built on cloud-native environments, it’s critical to protect against malicious automation as the majority of internet traffic are bots, not humans,” said Sam Crowther, founder and CEO at Kasada. “Not only do bad bots pose a major cybersecurity risk, but they also add greatly to cloud infrastructure expenditures and degrade the user experience with slow performance. The emergence of new solver services only makes matters worse until their supply chain is disrupted, which is what Kasada’s new platform upgrade is all about.”</p> <p>Elad Koren, chief product officer at Salt Security, said the evolution of the bots and botnets ecosystem does not represent a new phenomenon — the industry has seen it in the past in other fraud industries.</p> |

However, Koren said the ubiquity of cloud and API usage, plus the acceleration of attacks, add urgency to the matter. Koren said much like the trojans, malware, and mules in the late 2000s that impacted online banking, solver services and other API-as-a-Service solutions for mainstream botnets have help commoditize this “business.”

“In hype-sales and other highly motivated bot attacks, there’s a real ROI to be gained and a tangible benefit to the work in attacking websites and apps,” Koren said. “It’s becoming apparent that attackers who once had to jump through hoops to make their basic bots go through and buy those AirJordan1 pairs of shoes to sell in the secondary market can now simply use a paid service to get a stream of tokens to go through and bypass an existing solution.”

Giora Engel, co-founder and CEO at Neosec, said APIs are increasingly under attack because the adoption has exponentially grown and they are largely unprotected. Bot solutions focus on protecting the website or mobile app, but securing B2B APIs represents a blind spot for most organizations.

“Every company that exposes APIs opens up their core systems to the outside,” Engel said. “APIs are the connective tissues that link businesses, extending through cloud connections and different applications in the cloud. This traffic must be protected just as much as the sensitive data the cloud possesses.”

Scott Gerlach, co-founder and CSO at StackHawk, said with the continued move to the cloud, and the distribution of workloads, new attack vectors are popping up daily. Gerlach said keeping critical customer data and high-value products protected requires first finding vulnerabilities in APIs before they are pushed into the world.

“When obvious and exploitable vulnerabilities are remediated, bad actors will seek to exploit valid functions,” Gerlach said. “Protecting APIs requires secure design, fixing security issues before production, and using functionality to make sure valid functions aren’t being manipulated.”

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| HEADLINE | 06/03 Cybersecurity for federal dams falls short |
| SOURCE | https://www.scmagazine.com/analysis/critical-infrastructure/accountability-unclear-as-cybersecurity-for-federal-dams-falls-short |
| GIST | <p>As geopolitical fallout from the Russian invasion of Ukraine creates new potential risk, cybersecurity officials within the federal government have publicly fretted about the vulnerability of U.S. critical infrastructure to retaliatory cyberattacks from Moscow or ransomware groups. Findings from a recent audit of cybersecurity controls for a dam control system underscore why they’re concerned.</p> <p>A report from the Tennessee Valley Authority Inspector General concluded that the agency’s non-power dam control system found numerous security shortfalls and a lack of clarity who in the agency had ultimate ownership over securing access to the system.</p> <p>Perhaps most concerningly, TVA officials told auditors there was no clear owner of the non-power dam control system, with two separate teams intimately involved in its design, maintenance and operation. However, neither was designated to be accountable for failures in cybersecurity planning, something that auditors said was corrected by TVA prior to the release of the report.</p> <p>"Without clear ownership, the maintenance and operation of cybersecurity controls may not occur, increasing cybersecurity risks related to the control system," wrote David P. Wheeler, assistant inspector general for TVA.</p> <p>The audit, which took place between December 2021 and April 2022, identified numerous deficiencies in the way TVA officials secured their control system. Non-power dams under the TVA are run through a control system operated off-site and are used to adjust water flows.</p> |

Most of the technical details and recommendations for mitigation were omitted from the report to avoid tipping off attackers, but it does reveal some basic shortfalls that left the system exposed. The agency ran older versions of operating and control system software for the non-power dam control that were vulnerable to exploits, had “inappropriate” physical and logical access barriers, and operated in an environment where it was unclear who was responsible for cybersecurity.

“We found operation system and control system software vulnerabilities that could be used to gain inappropriate access to the non-power dam control system, allowing for adjustments to water flows that could potentially have a negative impact on river management,” auditors wrote.

Hacker accessed water treatment plant control systems

Last year, a malicious hacker was [able to gain access](#) to the control systems for a water treatment plant in Oldsmar, Florida, manipulating the system to increase the amount of lye, something that could have tainted the local water supply. While both relate to [water control systems](#), auditors say the potential stakes for a compromise were not nearly as high in this case.

In discussions with TVA officials, they determined that “risks related to river management [from exploitation] would be low based on their location, size, and existing physical controls that limit water flow adjustments.”

Even still, an incident where an unauthorized party gained access still “poses a high reputational risk for TVA.”

While the inability to patch or update systems in a timely manner leaves assets exposed to potential cyberattacks, experts in industrial control system cybersecurity say many critical infrastructure entities don't always have the same freedom or luxury to temporarily shut down operations to update a system the way some private businesses do. Doing so might disrupt otherwise [essential services like water or power](#), or introduce new software code that can wreak havoc on interoperability with other systems.

Mike Hamilton, chief information security officer for managed detection and response contractor Critical Insight and a former vice chair of the DHS State, Local, Tribal and Territorial Coordinating Council, told SC Media in April that when it comes to managing industrial control systems and operational technology, keeping things up and running usually takes precedence over security.

Many organizations still “do not care about security, do not care about privacy, do not care about anything other than availability.”

“Once you get something to work, do not touch it,” Hamilton told SC Media. “And that [mentality] just makes the legacy technology problem proliferate.”

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| HEADLINE | 06/06 Russian ministry website hacked |
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| SOURCE | https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/russian-ministry-website/ |
| GIST | <p>Russia’s Ministry of Construction, Housing and Utilities website has been reportedly hacked, with an internet search for the site leading to a “Glory to Ukraine” sign in Ukrainian.</p> <p>RIA, Russia’s state news agency, quoted a ministry representative on Sunday, revealing that the site was down, but users’ personal data was unaffected.</p> <p>RIA said that hackers were purportedly demanding a ransom to prevent the disclosure of personal data to the public.</p> <p>Many Russian state-owned companies and news organizations have suffered attacks in recent months since Russia invaded Ukraine.</p> |

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| | <p>In February, state-owned news agency TASS and daily newspaper <i>Kommersant</i> were hacked, while St Petersburg-based news outlet Fontanka's content was replaced with a message addressed to Russia's citizens that read, "This is not our war, let's stop it!"</p> <p>In May, Russia's television listings system was hacked during 'Victory Day.' The hack affected several major networks, including Channel One, Rossiya-1 and NTV-Plus.</p> <p>Last month, hacktivist group Anonymous announced on social media that it's launching a cyber-war against the pro-Russian group Killnet, which recently attacked European institutions. In March, the hacktivist group claimed it breached the database of the Russian federal agency responsible for the supervision of communications, information technology and mass media, leaking over 360,000 files in the process.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/04 Anonymous leaks Russia law firm data |
| SOURCE | https://www.hackread.com/anonymous-hacktivist-leak-1tb-russia-law-firm-data/ |
| GIST | <p>Rustam Kurmaev and Partners work with the Russian government and other high-profile banking, media, oil, and industrial companies, including American firms.</p> <p>The Anonymous hacktivists collective has struck Russia again by leaking approximately 1TB of data from a leading Russian law firm identified as Rustam Kurmaev and Partners (RKP Law).</p> <p>The news arrives just two days after the collective leaked hundreds of gigabytes of data from the servers of Russia's largest media holdings with over 100 regional radio stations, Vyber Radio.</p> <p>It is worth noting that Anonymous waged a cyberwar against Russia in late February 2022 dubbed #OpRussia after the country invaded Ukrainian territories, referring it to "special military operation" to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine.</p> <p>Anonymous' Announcement</p> <p>The hacktivists who go by the Twitter handle of @DepaixPorteur and @B00daMooda took to Twitter to announce the leaking of the data trove belonging to RKP Law. In one tweet, @DepaixPorteur stated that:</p> <p><i>We are Anonymous – We have hacked RKPLaw (rkplawru) and leaked 1TB of files, emails, court files, client files, backups, and more! They have a very large (220 clients) and an interesting client list which I will post in the comments.</i></p> <p>Emma Best, a journalist, and co-founder of a non-profit whistleblower organization Distributed Denial of Secrets, aka DDoSecrets, also tweeted about the leak. Best announced that the enormous data dump is also available on DDoSecrets.</p> <p>On the other hand, @YourAnonNews, and @YourAnonTV, two of the largest social media representatives of the Anonymous movement also tweeted about the data leak stating that:</p> <p><i>"Once again, #Anonymous delivers Many thanks to @DepaixPorteur," tweeted @YourAnonNews. "Just In: #Anonymous released a terabyte of data and emails from Rustam Kurmaev and Partners (RKP Law), a Russian law firm that works with major banking, media, oil, and industrial firms and state interests, including American companies. #OpRussia," said @YourAnonTV.</i></p> <p>About RKP Law</p> <p>Rustam Kurmaev and Partners has been operating in Russia for over 20 years and represents around 500 clients, including the Volkswagen Group Russia, Ikea, Toyota, Jones Lang LaSalle, Mechel PJSC, ChTPZ PJSC, Abbott Laboratories, Baker Hughes, ING Bank, Yamaha Motor, Caterpillar, Panasonic, Mars, Gillette, 2x2 Channel, VimpelCom, Citibank, and Sberbank.</p> |

Details of Leaked Data

According to DDoSecrets, revealed that RKP Law was hacked by Anonymous affiliated B00da (@B00daMooda) and Porteur (@DepaixPorteur). The leak could be devastating for the company considering that it specializes in resolving real estate, construction, corporate, and commercial sector disputes.

Moreover, the law firm also resolves disputes regarding the criminal defense of business and creates a systematic defense strategy for corporate managers and top management in various stages of criminal proceedings. Furthermore, the company deals in anti-corruption law as well.

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| HEADLINE | 06/03 Microsoft disrupts Bohrium hackers |
| SOURCE | https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/microsoft-disrupts-bohrium-hackers-spear-phishing-operation/ |
| GIST | <p>The Microsoft Digital Crimes Unit (DCU) has disrupted a spear-phishing operation linked to an Iranian threat actor tracked as Bohrium that targeted customers in the U.S., Middle East, and India.</p> <p>Bohrium has targeted organizations from a wide range of industry sectors, including tech, transportation, government, and education, according to Amy Hogan-Burney, the General Manager of Microsoft DCU.</p> <p>Microsoft has taken down 41 domains used in this campaign to establish a command and control infrastructure that enabled the attackers to deploy malicious tools designed to help them gain access to targets' devices and exfiltrate stolen information from compromised systems.</p> <p>According to evidence provided by Microsoft in court filings [PDF], the Iranian hackers have been "intentionally accessing and sending malicious software, code, and instructions to the protected computers, operating systems, and computers networks of Microsoft and the customers of Microsoft, without authorization [..]."</p> <p>While Microsoft did not reveal the timeline of this spear-phishing operation, some of the dozens of domains taken down have been used to host and push malware payloads as far back as 2017.</p> <p>"Bohrium actors create fake social media profiles, often posing as recruiters. Once personal information was obtained from the victims, Bohrium sent malicious emails with links that ultimately infected their target's computers with malware," Hogan-Burney said.</p> <p>"This activity was uncovered by Microsoft's Threat Intelligence Center (MSTIC), which tracks the world's nation-state and cybercrime actors so we can better protect our customers."</p> <p>This action is part of a long series of lawsuits targeting malicious infrastructure used in attacks against Microsoft customers worldwide.</p> <p>"To date, in 24 lawsuits – five against nation-state actors – we've taken down more than 10,000 malicious websites used by cybercriminals and nearly 600 sites used by nation-state actors," Microsoft's Corporate Vice President for Customer Security & Trust Tom Burt said in December 2021 when Redmond seized sites used by APT15 Chinese state hackers.</p> <p>Earlier this year, Microsoft also took down APT28 domains used in attacks against Ukraine and sinkhole 65 hardcoded domains to disrupt a botnet controlled by the ZLoader cybercrime gang.</p> <p>Redmond also sued the North Korean-linked Thallium cyber-espionage group in December 2019 and seized 50 domains part of their malicious domain infrastructure.</p> <p>The same month, Microsoft's Digital Crimes Unit successfully took over servers used in attacks by the Iran-backed APT35 (aka Charming Kitten, Phosphorus, or Ajax Security Team) threat actor.</p> |

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| | Previously, Microsoft filed 15 other similar cases against the APT28 Russian-backed group in August 2018, which led to the seizure of another set of 91 malicious domains. |
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| HEADLINE | 06/03 FTC: 46,000 lost \$1B crypto in scams |
| SOURCE | https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/americans-report-losing-over-1-billion-to-cryptocurrency-scams/ |
| GIST | <p>The U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) says over 46,000 people Americans have reported losing more than \$1 billion worth of cryptocurrency to scams between January 2021 and March 2022.</p> <p>This is a significant increase compared to last year's report issued by the FTC, when the agency revealed that roughly \$80 million were lost to cryptocurrency investment scams based on around 7,000 reports.</p> <p>Today's report aligns with the FBI's 2021 Internet Crime Report [PDF]. The U.S. law enforcement agency said that tens of thousands of reports pointed to over \$1.6 billion in cryptocurrency losses.</p> <p>"In 2021, the IC3 received 34,202 complaints involving the use of some type of cryptocurrency, such as Bitcoin, Ethereum, Litecoin, or Ripple," the FBI said [PDF].</p> <p>"While that number showed a decrease from 2020's victim count (35,229), the loss amount reported in IC3 complaints increased nearly seven-fold, from 2020's reported amount of \$246,212,432, to total reported losses in 2021 of more than \$1.6 billion."</p> <p>Today, the FTC also added that one in four dollars paid to scammers within the last year had been paid using cryptocurrency.</p> <p>Based on FTC's analysis of cryptocurrency-linked scam reports, almost half of all consumers said they were led to fraudsters via ads, posts, or messages on social media platforms.</p> <p>Cryptocurrency investment scams top the charts regarding the number of losses reported by U.S. consumers, totaling \$575 million since January 2021.</p> <p>"These scams often falsely promise potential investors that they can earn huge returns by investing in their cryptocurrency schemes, but people report losing all the money they 'invest,'" the FTC said.</p> <p>In July 2021, the FBI warned cryptocurrency owners of fraudsters actively targeting virtual assets while impersonating cryptocurrency exchange or payment platform support staff in phone calls initiated by online tech support scam victims.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/03 Novartis: no sensitive data compromised |
| SOURCE | https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/novartis-says-no-sensitive-data-was-compromised-in-cyberattack/ |
| GIST | <p>Pharmaceutical giant Novartis says no sensitive data was compromised in a recent cyberattack by the Industrial Spy data-extortion gang.</p> <p>Industrial Spy is a hacking group that runs an extortion marketplace where they sell data stolen from compromised organizations.</p> <p>Yesterday, the hacking group began selling data allegedly stolen from Novartis on their Tor extortion marketplace for \$500,000 in bitcoins.</p> |

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| | <p>The threat actors claim that the data is related to RNA and DNA-based drug technology and tests from Novartis and were stolen "directly from the laboratory environment of the manufacturing plant."</p> <p>The data being sold consists of 7.7 MB of PDF files, which all have a timestamp of 2/25/2022 04:26, likely when the data was stolen.</p> <p>As the amount of data for sale is minimal, it is not clear if this is all the threat actors stole or if they have further data to sell later.</p> <p>BleepingComputer emailed Novartis to confirm the attack and theft of data and received the following statement.</p> <p><i>"Novartis is aware of this matter. We have thoroughly investigated it and we can confirm that no sensitive data has been compromised. We take data privacy and security very seriously and have implemented industry standard measures in response to these kind of threats to ensure the safety of our data." - Novartis.</i></p> <p>Novartis declined to answer any further questions about the breach, when it occurred, and how the threat actors gained access to their data.</p> <p>Industrial Spy is also known to use ransomware in attacks, but there is no evidence that devices were encrypted during the Novartis incident.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/04 Apple blocked 1.6M apps defrauding users |
| SOURCE | https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/apple-blocked-16-millions-apps-from-defrauding-users-in-2021/ |
| GIST | <p>Apple said this week that it blocked more than 343,000 iOS apps were blocked by the App Store App Review team for privacy violations last year, while another 157,000 were rejected for attempting to mislead or spamming iOS users.</p> <p>The company added that it also blocked over 34,500 applications from getting indexed on the App Store because they were using undocumented or hidden features.</p> <p>Apple also removed 155,000 more apps for bait-and-switch tactics, such as adding new features or capabilities after approval.</p> <p>Throughout 2021, the App Review team stopped more than 1.6 million risky or vulnerable apps and updates from landing on the App Store and potentially defrauding users.</p> <p>Last year, in the company's first fraud prevention analysis report, Apple said that almost 1 million problematic new apps and nearly 1 million app updates were rejected or removed by the App Review team.</p> <p>Apple says that its efforts to protect customers from fraud attempts require the monitoring and vigilance of multiple teams focused on several areas, from App Review to Discovery Fraud.</p> <p>"Apple is dedicated to keeping the App Store a safe and trusted place for people to discover and download apps," the company said in this year's report.</p> <p>"A key pillar in that effort is Apple's ongoing work detecting and taking action against bad actors who seek to defraud developers and users."</p> <p>Apple's efforts to protect users from fraud are welcome, seeing that scammy apps known as fleeceware are still a big problem on the iOS App Store, as discovered by researchers at Avast last year.</p> |

Such apps lure customers with promises of free trials but will instead require excessive subscription costs of thousands of dollars per year.

As Avast reported, roughly 200 such fleeceware apps with total estimated revenue of more than \$400 million across Apple's and Google's app stores.

One year before, Sophos researchers also spotted dozens of fleeceware apps downloaded by iOS users approximately 3,680,000 times and listed among the top-grossing apps on the App Store.

\$1.5 billion potentially fraudulent transactions prevented

Apple also added that it was able to protect its customers from \$1.5 billion in potentially fraudulent transactions throughout 2021.

It also blocked the use of more than 3.3 million stolen cards on Apple's online store platforms and banned almost 600,000 accounts from ever making transactions again across its platforms.

"For many people, no data is more sensitive than their financial information. That's why Apple has invested enormously in creating more secure payment technologies like Apple Pay and StoreKit," Apple added.

"These technologies are used by more than 905,000 apps to sell goods and services on the App Store. For example, with Apple Pay, credit card numbers are never shared with merchants — eliminating a risk factor in the payment transaction process."

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| HEADLINE | 06/04 Hackers stole \$275K Ethereum, 32 NFTs |
| SOURCE | https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/bored-ape-yacht-club-otherside-nfts-stolen-in-discord-server-hack/ |
| GIST | <p>Hackers reportedly stole over \$257,000 in Ethereum and thirty-two NFTs after the Yuga Lab's Bored Ape Yacht Club and Otherside Metaverse Discord servers were compromised to post a phishing scam.</p> <p>Earlier this morning, the Discord account for a Yuga Labs community manager was allegedly hacked to post a phishing scam on the company's Discord servers.</p> <p>This phishing scam pretended to be an exclusive, limited giveaway for existing BAYC, Mutant Ape Yacht Club (MAYC), and Otherside NFT holders, which included a link to a webpage that allowed a visitor to mint the free NFT.</p> <p>...the phishing scam added a sense of urgency, stating that only a limited amount of NFTs was available to be minted, which likely pushed visitors to abandon caution and rush to mint the free giveaway.</p> <p>Once a user visited the page and attempted to mint the giveaway, the page likely stole all Ethereum and NFTs held in the linked wallet.</p> <p>According to blockchain cybersecurity firm PeckShield, approximately 32 NFTs were stolen, including those from the Bored Ape Yacht Club, Otherdeed, Bored App Kennel Club, and Mutant Ape Yacht Club projects.</p> <p>Users also report that the hackers stole over 145 Ethereum during the phishing attack, worth approximately \$250,000.</p> <p>In April, a similar phishing attack occurred after Yuga Lab's Instagram account was hacked to promote a phishing scam that allowed approximately \$3 million worth of NFTs to be stolen.</p> |

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| | <p>At the time, Yuga Labs announced that they would never announce mints on Instagram, and users should only rely on posts from their Twitter accounts and Discord servers.</p> <p>"We will also NEVER announce mints on the BAYC or Otherside Instagram accounts first, ever," read a tweet from the Bored Ape Yacht Club Twitter account.</p> <p>"Only obtain information from our official twitter accounts: @BoredApeYC, @yugalabs, and @OthersideMeta. These will be crossposted on the #announcement channel of BAYC Discord."</p> <p>It is unclear how the community manager's account was compromised and if two-factor authentication was enabled, which usually prevents these attacks.</p> <p>BleepingComputer has contacted Yuga Labs with questions about the phishing attack but has not received a response at this time.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/03 YourCyanide ransomware few new tactics |
| SOURCE | https://www.darkreading.com/threat-intelligence/yourcyanide-ransomware-pastebin-discord-microsoft-links |
| GIST | <p>A new CMD-based ransomware variant is still under development, but researchers warn that its poisonous combination of multiple layers of obfuscation and the sneaky integration of legitimate service links into its attack make it a potentially formidable threat.</p> <p>YourCyanide traces its roots back to the GonnaCope ransomware family first discovered in April, a new report from the Trend Micro threat hunting team explains. It doesn't actually encrypt anything yet (researchers say that's likely coming soon), but it does rename all targeted files, steal information, and pilfer access tokens from popular applications like Chrome, Discord, and Microsoft Edge. It also self-propagates.</p> <p>YourCyanide includes a few new tactics, including using PasteBin, Discord, and Microsoft links to download its payload in stages, and hiding behind Enable Delayed Expansion functionality, the analysts note.</p> <p>"While YourCyanide and its other variants are currently not as impactful as other families, it represents an interesting update to ransomware kits by bundling a worm, a ransomware, and an information stealer into a single mid-tier ransomware framework," the ransomware variant report says. "It is also likely that these ransomware variants are in their development stages, making it a priority to detect and block them before they can evolve further and do even more damage."</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/03 LuoYu hackers deploy WinDealer backdoor |
| SOURCE | https://thehackernews.com/2022/06/chinese-luoyu-hackers-using-man-on-side.html?&web_view=true |
| GIST | <p>An "extremely sophisticated" Chinese-speaking advanced persistent threat (APT) actor dubbed LuoYu has been observed using a malicious Windows tool called WinDealer that's delivered by means of man-on-the-side attacks.</p> <p>"This groundbreaking development allows the actor to modify network traffic in-transit to insert malicious payloads," Russian cybersecurity company Kaspersky said in a new report. "Such attacks are especially dangerous and devastating because they do not require any interaction with the target to lead to a successful infection."</p> <p>Known to be active since 2008, organizations targeted by LuoYu are predominantly foreign diplomatic organizations established in China and members of the academic community as well as financial, defense, logistics, and telecommunications companies.</p> |

LuoYu's use of [WinDealer](#) was first documented by Taiwanese cybersecurity firm [TeamT5](#) at the Japan Security Analyst Conference (JSAC) in January 2021. Subsequent [attack campaigns](#) have used the malware to target Japanese entities, with isolated infections reported in Austria, Germany, India, Russia, and the U.S.

Other tools that feature prominently in the lesser-known adversary's malware arsenal include [PlugX](#) and its successor [ShadowPad](#), both of which have been used by a variety of Chinese threat actors to enable their strategic objectives. Additionally, the actor is known to target Linux, macOS, and Android devices.

WinDealer, for its part, has been delivered in the past via websites that act as [watering holes](#) and in the form of trojanized applications masquerading as instant messaging and video hosting services like Tencent QQ and Youku.

But the infection vector has since been traded for another distribution method that makes use of the automatic update mechanism of select legitimate applications to serve a compromised version of the executable on "rare occasions."

WinDealer, a modular malware platform at its core, comes with all the usual bells and whistles associated with a traditional backdoor, allowing it to Hoover sensitive information, capture screenshots, and execute arbitrary commands.

But where it also stands apart is its use of a complex IP generation algorithm to select a command-and-control (C2) server to connect to at random from a pool of 48,000 IP addresses.

"The only way to explain these seemingly impossible network behaviors is by assuming the existence of a man-on-the-side attacker who is able to intercept all network traffic and even modify it if needed," the company said.

A [man-on-the-side](#) attack, similar to a man-in-the-middle attack, enables a rogue interloper to read and inject arbitrary messages into a communications channel, but not modify or delete messages sent by other parties.

Man-on-the-side intrusions typically bank on strategically timing their messages in a manner that the malicious reply containing the attacker-supplied data is sent in response to a victim's request for a web resource before the actual response from the server.

The fact that the threat actor is able to control such a massive range of IP addresses could also explain the hijacking of the update mechanism associated with genuine apps to deliver the WinDealer payload, Kaspersky pointed out.

"Man-on-the-side-attacks are extremely destructive as the only condition needed to attack a device is for it to be connected to the internet," security researcher Suguru Ishimaru said.

"No matter how the attack has been carried out, the only way for potential victims to defend themselves is to remain extremely vigilant and have robust security procedures, such as regular antivirus scans, analysis of outbound network traffic, and extensive logging to detect anomalies."

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| HEADLINE | 06/03 New Docker cryptojacking campaign |
| SOURCE | https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/watchdog-hacking-group-launches-new-docker-cryptojacking-campaign/?&web_view=true |
| GIST | The WatchDog hacking group is conducting a new cryptojacking campaign with advanced techniques for intrusion, worm-like propagation, and evasion of security software. |

The hacking group targets exposed Docker Engine API endpoints and Redis servers and can quickly pivot from one compromised machine to the entire network.

The goal of the threat actors is to generate profit by mining cryptocurrency using the available computational resources of poorly secured servers.

Researchers at [Cado Labs discovered](#) the new hacking campaign, analyzing the threat actor's distinctive tactics, and are confident about their attribution to WatchDog.

A multi-stage attack

WatchDog launches the attacks by compromising misconfigured Docker Engine API endpoints with an open port 2375, giving them access to the daemon in default settings.

From there, WatchDog can list or modify containers and run arbitrary shell commands on them. The first shell script the hackers run is "cronb.sh" which checks the infection status of the host, lists processes, and fetches the second-stage payload, "ar.sh".

This second script use ps command hijacking to execute a process hiding shell script. Additionally, it performs timestamp manipulation ("timestomping") on shell execution logs to mislead forensic experts.

That payload also contains an Alibaba Cloud Agent remover to disable the security system on the particular cloud service.

Finally, an XMRig miner payload is dropped on the compromised machine, and a systemd service unit is added for persistence. For all this to take place, the user account leveraged by the hackers needs to have root privileges.

The third-stage payload incorporates zgrab, masscan, and pnsnscan to search the network for valid pivoting points, and downloads the final two scripts responsible for propagation, "c.sh" and "d.sh".

These are stored in a newly created directory named "...", which is easy to miss due to its similar look to the parent directory alias, making it more likely to be overlooked during an inspection.

The first script, "c.sh", disables SELinux and configures "ulimit" and "iptables" to establish communication with Redis servers in the network while cutting all other access from outside.

The second script, "d.sh", is similar, but instead of Redis, it targets other Docker Engine API endpoints and infects them with a laced Alpine Linux container that runs the initial access script, "cronb.sh".

Attribution

Many of the scripts used by WatchDog contain logos and references for a rival hacking group known as TeamTNT, indicating that WatchDog likely stole the tools from their rival.

Cado highlights several strong points that indicate overlap with WatchDog's 2021 campaign, like using the same Monero wallet address for mining, using b2f628 directory naming in URLs, and using oracle zzhreceive[.]top domain, and the use of 1.0.4.tar.gz for the payload delivery.

Moreover, the actors now avoid using Golang payloads that Cado Security uniquely linked to them, yet another attribution clue.

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| HEADLINE | 06/03 VPN services in India 'ready to pull plug' |
| SOURCE | https://therecord.media/expressvpn-pulls-servers-out-of-india-over-cybersecurity-law-and-others-may-follow/ |
| GIST | Several virtual private network (VPN) services said they are considering moving operations out of India following ExpressVPN's announcement this week that it plans to remove servers from the country in light of new and controversial cybersecurity rules. |

On April 28, the Indian government [updated](#) section 70B of the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000 to add several measures. Service providers, intermediaries, data centers, companies and government organizations have six hours to report a range of intrusions to [CERT-IN](#), an agency tasked with organizing the government's response to computer intrusions.

The new rules, which take effect in June, caused outrage among tech companies across the globe. Many argued the rules would be cumbersome and provide hackers with readily-available pools of data to steal from.

A technology trade group that represents Apple, Google, Microsoft and other tech giants [came out forcefully against the new directive](#), but Indian officials have refused to back down.

The rules were heavily criticized by VPN companies that make a point of not storing the kind of user data now required by the new rules in India. In response to the complaints, Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology Rajeve Chandrasekhar [said companies are "free to leave"](#) the country if they will not follow the new rules.

"If you don't have the logs, start maintaining the logs. If you are a VPN that wants to hide and be anonymous about those who use VPNs to do business in India and do not want to go by these rules, then frankly, pull out of India. That is the only opportunity you have," Chandrasekhar said [at an event on May 22](#) about the new rules.

On Thursday, ExpressVPN [released a blog post](#) explaining that it will remove its Indian-based VPN servers in response to the new rules.

ExpressVPN is one of the world's most popular VPN services alongside SurfShark, NordVPN, ProtonVPN and others.

The company said users in India will still be able to connect to VPN servers that will give them Indian IP addresses and allow them to access the internet as if they were located in India through virtual servers physically located in Singapore and the UK.

"Under India's new VPN rule, which is set to come into effect on June 27, 2022, companies will be required to store users' real names, IP addresses assigned to them, usage patterns, and other identifying data," the company said.

"The new data law initiated by India's Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), intended to help fight cybercrime, is incompatible with the purpose of VPNs, which are designed to keep users' online activity private. The law is also overreaching and so broad as to open up the window for potential abuse. We believe the damage done by potential misuse of this kind of law far outweighs any benefit that lawmakers claim would come from it."

The company went on to say that it "refuses to participate in the Indian government's attempts to limit internet freedom" and will "never collect logs of user activity, including no logging of browsing history, traffic destination, data content, or DNS queries."

They pledged to never store connection logs, logs of IP addresses, outgoing VPN IP addresses, connection timestamps, or session durations. The company has built its VPN servers so that they are not able to log or store data on users.

'Ready to pull the plug'

When contacted for comment by The Record, several other leading VPN service providers said they are considering similar actions.

Laura Tyrylyte, head of public relations at Nord Security, said that if the current Indian government's position does not change in the next couple of weeks, they will also remove their servers "as there will be no other way to stay in India while preserving the privacy of our customers and integrity of our service."

"That said, we don't see any reason to remove our infrastructure earlier than necessary. We also aim to reach out to our customers and inform them about upcoming changes. We believe that the right to privacy is essential and encourage regulators not to rush into decisions that may negatively affect fundamental digital rights," Tyrylyte said.

A spokesperson for ProtonVPN went further, saying India's new regulations around VPN services will "erode civil liberties and make it harder for people to protect their data online."

"ProtonVPN is monitoring the situation, but ultimately we remain committed to our no-logs policy and preserving our users' privacy," the spokesperson said.

A SurfShark spokesperson made similar comments, saying the company is not shutting down its servers in India yet but is "always ready to pull the plug if the environment we have operations in becomes unfavorable."

"As the new regulation goes against the nature of VPNs' services – which seek to protect users' privacy, our team remains committed to providing no-logs services to Indian users. If implemented, the new law will significantly impact users' data privacy," the SurfShark spokesperson said.

The new rules have been a lightning rod for controversy since they were released in late April. While cybersecurity experts have lauded the country for taking a firm stance on cybersecurity, some privacy advocates have questioned whether the Indian government is overstepping.

Kurt Opsahl, deputy executive director and general counsel for the Electronic Frontier Foundation, told The Record that the rules "pose huge problems for free expression and Internet users' privacy, including dangerous requirements for platforms to identify the origins of messages and pre-screen content, which fundamentally breaks strong encryption for messaging tools."

"EFF understands and respects ExpressVPNs decision to pull out of India over India's draconian cybersecurity and IT rules," Opsahl said.

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| HEADLINE | 06/03 Louisiana: ransomware attack Alexandria |
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| SOURCE | https://therecord.media/louisiana-authorities-investigating-ransomware-attack-on-city-of-alexandria/ |
| GIST | <p>Louisiana state officials are investigating a ransomware attack affecting Alexandria, a 50,000-person city about two hours outside of Baton Rouge.</p> <p>On Thursday, the AlphV ransomware gang added the city to its list of victims. City officials initially confirmed that there was a cyberattack to local news outlet KALB, telling reporters that it was "notified of a possible systems breach."</p> <p>"The matter is currently being investigated. All City operations are continuing as scheduled," city officials said in a statement on Thursday night.</p> <p>Mike Steele, communications director at the Louisiana Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, told The Record on Friday that state officials had been pulled in to help with the response and investigation of the attack.</p> <p>"Cybersecurity resources from the state have been deployed to help out with the situation. The city and parish reached out to the state for support and that's when our team stepped in," Steele said. "There is a criminal investigation at the state level as well as some federal agencies involved in a federal investigation as well."</p> |

Steele could not provide details about how widespread the ransomware attack was but said they will have more information this weekend once an analysis of the attack is completed.

Emsisoft threat analyst and ransomware expert Brett Callow said the attack on Alexandria would be the 22nd reported incident affecting a local government in the U.S. this year.

Last year, 36 local governments in the U.S. reported ransomware incidents by June, and 77 were attacked by the end of the year, according to Callow.

Both 2019 and 2020 saw 113 reported ransomware attacks on local governments in the U.S.

On Friday, AlphV updated their post about Alexandria, threatening Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards directly and referencing a series of ransomware attacks that crippled several state agencies in 2019.

In 2019, Edwards was forced to activate the state's cyber incident response plan for the first time after multiple school districts were hit, including the Tangipahoa Parish school district as well as the Sabine, Morehouse, and Ouachita parishes.

"I declared a state of emergency and began executing the playbook. It was the first time in Louisiana's history that a cyberattack was addressed like a disaster," Edwards said during the National Governors Association's biennial National Summit on State Cybersecurity last year.

"We activated state police, the office of technology services, and the national guard cyber team."

During the 2019 attacks, the Lafayette Parish School System was forced to cut off all internet and phone connections to central offices as a way to mitigate the damage.

On Friday, AlphV said 2019 had "taught you nothing" and said the state "can't get away" this time.

"Your servers are lying down again and the network is tightly closed and unavailable. We got more than 80 GB in compressed form of important data city [sic]," the ransomware gang said.

"Don't make past mistakes and do the right thing. This time you won't get away with it."

The note also included a direct threat toward KALB, apparently for its brief report on the incident.

"Further data leakage will be on your conscience. Your tongue is your enemy. Nother personal, just business. Best regards. 1 word = 1 mistake = 1 file," the gang said.

Callow said it was the first time he had seen a ransomware gang explicitly attempting to silence a media outlet.

"I can only assume AlphV believes press attention at this point in time would lessen their chances of being paid – which may be a good reason for the press to shine a bright light on the incident," he said.

AlphV – also known as BlackCat – has attacked at least three U.S. colleges and universities this year, including Florida International University and North Carolina A&T University. Experts believe the group is a rebrand of the BlackMatter and DarkSide ransomware groups.

The FBI released an alert in April saying they have tracked at least 60 ransomware attacks by the AlphV group as of March. The group emerged late last year and became known for aggressively posting details about its victims publicly.

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| SOURCE | https://www.wsj.com/articles/bermuda-doubles-down-on-crypto-despite-recent-market-turmoil-11654248600?mod=hp_minor_pos10 |
| GIST | <p>Bermuda, long known for its offshore insurance and reinsurance industry, is betting that its transparency around digital-asset regulation can help it attract more cryptocurrency projects and firms, despite the recent turmoil in crypto markets.</p> <p>“We are aware of the recent devaluation in the price of cryptocurrencies and remain confident that it does not threaten the island’s ability to become a crypto hub,” said Jason Hayward, Bermuda’s minister of economy and labor. “This industry downturn is likely to advance our goal and positively impact our long-term growth and role in this sector.”</p> <p>Bitcoin, the world’s largest cryptocurrency by market capitalization, has fallen more than 50% since its November record high. The collapse in value of TerraUSD and its sister stablecoin, Luna, in recent weeks saddled investors with billions of dollars in losses. As traders take flight from risky investments amid rising interest rates and high inflation, more than \$1 trillion in digital money has vanished since November.</p> <p>Bermuda is one of the few jurisdictions in the world that has enacted a comprehensive framework regulating cryptocurrency, according to industry experts. Bermudan regulators say that their understanding of international business, which accounts for about 27% of the island’s economy, along with a trained local workforce, translate into a base for the development of a thriving digital-assets industry on the island. That puts Bermuda in competition with other jurisdictions vying for a share of the crypto industry, such as Malta and Liechtenstein.</p> <p>Mr. Hayward said the island has been expanding its financial technology and crypto industries since 2017 and persevered through the last downturn in 2018. He said the recent collapse of Terra and Luna highlighted the importance of oversight and risk mitigation, something Bermuda has experience with as an insurance and reinsurance hub.</p> <p>Bermuda’s approach to luring crypto businesses comes as many crypto companies say regulatory uncertainty remains a barrier for the wider adoption and further development of the industry. The crypto sector in the U.S. still lacks significant oversight and investor protections. President Biden in March signed an executive order that directs federal agencies to study digital currencies.</p> <p>Observers aren’t surprised that Bermuda wants to establish itself as a crypto hub. David Schwartz, president of the Financial & International Business Association, said Bermuda is leading the way in establishing an infrastructure for the crypto industry, passing a comprehensive framework for regulating digital assets and tightening up its anti-money-laundering controls.</p> <p>The Financial Action Task Force, a Paris-based organization that sets anti-money-laundering law standards, said Bermuda has made significant improvements to its anti-money-laundering technical compliance regime and has enacted and amended several key regulations, according to its 2020 mutual evaluation. But FATF noted that there were challenges recovering the proceeds from illicit activities. Mr. Schwartz added that it remains to be seen how the Bermuda regulators intend to supervise and examine the crypto firms.</p> <p>“They’ve got great rules and regulations and laws, but it’s all about the implementation at the end of the day,” he said.</p> <p>Bermuda enacted a regulatory regime governing initial coin offerings and digital business assets in 2018, requiring crypto businesses to seek approval to operate there from the Bermuda Monetary Authority, which also oversees the island’s insurance and reinsurance industry.</p> <p>The BMA has licensed 14 digital-asset companies since then, including four crypto companies in 2022, according to Craig Swan, the chief executive of BMA, who oversees all supervisory and operational activities conducted by the agency.</p> |

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| | <p>Circle Internet Financial Ltd., which issues the stablecoin USD Coin; crypto-lending startup BlockFi; and crypto exchange Bittrex Inc. all have operations in Bermuda, Mr. Hayward said.</p> <p>Bermuda’s licensing process can be broken down into three stages: a “sandbox” test license, similar to the one used in the island’s insurance-technology licensing regime; a modified license; and finally a full license, according to Mr. Hayward. He said the testing license typically lasts between three to 12 months, to allow a crypto company to try out its business. But he declined to give the amount of time typically needed to reach a full license, saying it depends on the complexity of the crypto product.</p> <p>The licensing requirements in Bermuda include prudential supervision that examines risk management, governance and cybersecurity, as well as compliance with anti-money-laundering and counterterrorism financing regulations, such as sanctions screening and transactions monitoring, Mr. Swan said. The regulator also uses monitoring tools from blockchain analytics firm Chainalysis Inc. to help with its risk-based supervision, he added.</p> <p>“So obviously the persons that we want in Bermuda must be fit and proper because essentially we’re looking at maintaining the jurisdiction’s quality name,” he said.</p> <p>Other potential hurdles that could hinder crypto’s growth in Bermuda include the industry’s limited understanding of anti-money-laundering standards required for a license and a reluctance by banks and insurers to take crypto firms on as clients. In response, the BMA has been providing online training for service providers to help them understand the regulator’s anti-money-laundering expectations. And more banks and insurers are now taking on cryptocurrency firms as clients, Mr. Swan said.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/04 Online pro-gun extremism ‘pretty cool stuff’ |
| SOURCE | https://apnews.com/article/technology-gun-politics-shootings-race-and-ethnicity-2d37c8ede6135eca9f0b2150e7927a92 |
| GIST | <p>The young man in the jeans and sunglasses proudly shows off his gun in the YouTube video, then instructs his 1 million subscribers how to fit an extra clip in his gun belt, and offers a chilling observation.</p> <p>“Pretty cool for active shooter stuff, if you need extra mags.”</p> <p>It’s a typical video, one of thousands teaching military-style training and tactics to civilian gun owners, offering instructions on silencers and grenade launchers, on shooting from vehicles or into buildings. Other websites sell ghost gun kits, gas masks and body armor.</p> <p>“You shouldn’t be scared of the NRA. You should be scared of us,” one online ghost gun dealer Tweeted last week.</p> <p>As Americans reel from repeated mass shootings, law enforcement officials and experts on extremism are taking increasing notice of the sprawling online space devoted to guns and gun rights: gun forums, tactical training videos, websites that sell unregistered gun kits and social media platforms where far-right gun owners swap practical tips with talk of dark plots to take their weapons.</p> <p>It’s an ecosystem rich with potential recruits for extremist groups exploiting the often blurry line separating traditional support for a Constitutional right from militant anti-government movements that champion racism and violence.</p> <p>White supremacists have carried out most of the deadliest attacks on U.S. soil in the last five years, including a 2018 shooting inside a Pittsburgh synagogue and a 2019 rampage in which a gunman targeting Hispanics inside a Texas Walmart killed 23 people.</p> |

The gunman who perpetrated [last month's rampage in Buffalo](#), for example, claimed in a rambling racist diatribe that he was radicalized when pandemic boredom led him to far-right social media groups and tactical training videos he found online.

One of the companies specifically cited by the gunman sells firearm accessories and operates popular social media channels boasting hundreds of training videos. The videos cover topics like shooting from cars, assaulting a building, using gas masks while shooting, and night vision goggles.

"I think we're going to see an increase in these kinds of attacks," said Kurt Braddock, a professor and extremism researcher at the Polarization and Extremism Research and Innovation Lab at American University. "Until we're able to figure out a way to address this, this kind of disinformation is going to keep spreading, and with it the risk of increased radicalization and violence."

Elected leaders in some states are considering how to address the internet's role in radicalizing extremists. New York lawmakers, for example, recently introduced legislation to require social media companies to set policies on "hateful conduct" and to create mechanisms for users to report disturbing posts they may read.

New York Attorney General Letitia James initiated an investigation into some of the platforms used by the Buffalo gunman, who [streamed his attack on Twitch](#), which is owned by Amazon. Twitch pulled the livestream after about two minutes.

Federal authorities have also taken notice, increasing funding for investigations into domestic terrorism, a challenge that FBI Director [Christopher Wray last year described as "metastasizing."](#) But there's little law enforcement can do but monitor as extremists use the threat of gun control to recruit new members.

Extremists paint any effort to regulate firearms as the prelude to widespread gun seizures, according to Callum Hood, director of research at the Center for Countering Digital Hate, a UK-based organization that researches online extremism and abuse.

"The message quickly becomes 'the government is coming to take your guns and leave you undefended,'" Hood said. That's despite the obvious political challenges that even modest attempts at gun control face in the U.S. Despite a long and growing list of mass shootings, gun rights have not been restricted in any significant way in the U.S. in decades.

Rather than be under threat, guns are flourishing. Since the year 2000, the year after Columbine school shooting in Colorado, the number of firearms manufactured in the U.S. has tripled. There are now an estimated 400 million guns in the U.S. — more than one for everyone in the country — giving the nation the world's highest gun ownership rate.

Gun manufacturers and industry groups like the National Rifle Association bear some responsibility for unfounded conspiracy theories about federal plots to seize American's guns, according to Braddock.

"What's the first rule in salesmanship? It's to create the need for the item. We think about guns as something different — and they are because they're instruments of violence — but they're also commodities sold in huge quantities," Braddock said. "They're creating the illusion of need."

Contacted by the Associated Press, one website selling ghost gun kits responded with a statement saying "all questions" about regulating firearms amount to "naked attempts to disarm traditional Americans, weaponize the government against them, and subject them to the ignorant and vicious tools of federal power."

While some of the creators of tactical training videos posted on platforms like YouTube say their intended audience is law enforcement, others say their subscriber base is mostly those looking to arm themselves against the government.

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| | <p>Despite their alarm, law enforcement officials and experts on extremism caution there's little to do about the growing online spaces devoted to military-style weaponry unless they find evidence of illegal gun sales or other crimes.</p> <p>For their part, tech companies and social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter say they have rules to prohibit violent threats, hate speech and other content that poses a direct harm. Some platforms also prohibit the sale of firearms.</p> <p>Further restrictions on content about guns or even extremism will only backfire anyway, according to Amy Cooter, an expert on militias. While efforts to ban users might be successful in the short term, they're bound to fail as those users flee to other platforms with less moderation.</p> <p>"If we want to reduce the size of the movement, de-platforming is really effective," Cooter said. "But If we want to de-radicalize it, it is not. The most extreme elements will find other ways to stay connected."</p> |
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Terror Conditions

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| HEADLINE | 06/05 US bombing al-Shabaab in Somalia again |
| SOURCE | https://taskandpurpose.com/news/the-u-s-is-bombing-somalia-again/ |
| GIST | <p>Two weeks after the Biden administration confirmed it was sending hundreds of U.S. ground troops back to Somalia, but not for "combat," U.S. forces launched an airstrike on militants in the country. United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) performed the attack against al-Shabaab fighters in a rural part of the country, in response to the insurgents attacking Somali government forces. Five al-Shabaab fighters were reported killed in the attack.</p> <p>"U.S. forces are authorized to conduct strikes in support of designated partner forces," AFRICOM noted in its statement on the strike, which happened on Friday, June 3. AFRICOM did not specify what type of aircraft performed the attack.</p> <p>It's the second American airstrike on al-Shabaab this year, following one in February where a drone struck militants following an insurgent attack on Somali troops. In that instance, AFRICOM said that American troops were not close to the operation.</p> <p>Drone strikes in Somalia had steadily risen over the last decade, particularly under the Trump administration, peaking in 2019 with 61 incidents, according to data from the New America Foundation. Those numbers significantly dropped once the Biden administration took power in 2021. Prior to the February attack, the last military drone strike had been conducted in August 2021.</p> <p>Last month, the Biden administration announced it would be sending troops back to Somalia after more than a year away. The mission, AFRICOM said, would not be a combat operation, but an "advise and assist and training mission" to help the Somali government fight al-Shabaab. Although the Pentagon has stressed the soldiers are not directly taking part in combat, American support has included air strikes against the militant group. In both the February attack and this Friday's operation, AFRICOM noted it has the authority to launch such airstrikes to support the Somali government. The Trump administration pulled roughly 700 troops out of the country on the Horn of Africa in December 2020, with the forces moving to bases in nearby Kenya and Djibouti (some special operations forces remained in Somalia, and advisors would still visit to train federal troops).</p> <p>U.S. forces have a long, rough history in Somalia. The disastrous Battle of Mogadishu in 1993 failed in its objective and resulted in American deaths. After the terror attacks in September 2001, the United States has repeatedly engaged Somalia, backing a 2006 Ethiopian-led invasion of the country to force out the Islamic Courts Union, a political alliance that had taken power. During the war the Islamist extremist</p> |

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| | <p>group al-Shabaab formed, which has since been the target for American special operations forces and the CIA, for its link to Al-Qaeda. The first military drone strike on al-Shabaab happened in 2011.</p> <p>The United States has no declared wars on the African continent, although American forces are engaged in advisory and counter-terrorism roles across Africa and have engaged in combat with militants. There have been American deaths in recent years, including four soldiers killed in Niger in 2017, and a soldier and two defense contractors killed by al-Shabaab in Kenya in 2020.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/05 Nigeria officials: dozens dead church attack |
| SOURCE | https://komonews.com/news/nation-world/over-50-feared-dead-in-nigeria-church-attack-officials-say-06-05-2022-224009436 |
| GIST | <p>ABUJA, Nigeria (AP) — Gunmen opened fire on worshippers and detonated explosives at a Catholic church in southwestern Nigeria on Sunday, leaving dozens feared dead, state lawmakers said.</p> <p>The attackers targeted the St. Francis Catholic Church in Ondo state just as the worshippers gathered on Pentecost Sunday, legislator Ogunmolasuyi Oluwole said. Among the dead were many children, he said.</p> <p>The presiding priest was abducted as well, said Adelegbe Timileyin, who represents the Owo area in Nigeria's lower legislative chamber.</p> <p>"Our hearts are heavy," Ondo Governor Rotimi Akeredolu tweeted Sunday. "Our peace and tranquility have been attacked by the enemies of the people."</p> <p>Authorities did not immediately release an official death toll. Timileyin said at least 50 people had been killed, though others put the figure higher. Videos appearing to be from the scene of the attack showed church worshippers lying in pools of blood while people around them wailed.</p> <p>Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari said "only fiends from the nether region could have conceived and carried out such dastardly act," according to a statement from his spokesman.</p> <p>"No matter what, this country shall never give in to evil and wicked people, and darkness will never overcome light. Nigeria will eventually win," said Buhari, who was elected after vowing to end Nigeria's prolonged security crisis.</p> <p>In Rome, Pope Francis responded to news of the attack.</p> <p>"The pope has learned of the attack on the church in Ondo, Nigeria and the deaths of dozens of worshippers, many children, during the celebration of Pentecost. While the details are being clarified, Pope Francis prays for the victims and the country, painfully affected at a time of celebration, and entrusts them both to the Lord so that he may send his spirit to console them," the pope said in a statement issued by the Vatican press office.</p> <p>It was not immediately clear who was behind the attack on the church. While much of Nigeria has struggled with security issues, Ondo is widely known as one of Nigeria's most peaceful states. The state, though, has been caught up in a rising violent conflict between farmers and herders.</p> <p>Nigeria's security forces did not immediately respond to questions about how the attack occurred or if there are any leads about suspects. Owo is about 345 kilometers (215 miles) east of Lagos.</p> <p>"In the history of Owo, we have never experienced such an ugly incident," said lawmaker Oluwole. "This is too much."</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/05 Swedish farmhouse: weapons, attack plan |
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| SOURCE | https://www.nationalmemo.com/in-swedish-farmhouse-a-neo-nazi-weapons-stockpile-and-plan-to-attack-schools/particle-1 |
| GIST | <p>When Swedish police arrested a 25-year-old man at a farmhouse outside of Gothenburg last November, the only official explanation was that he was arrested for “gross preparation for general destruction.”</p> <p>Now the details of what they found inside the house have been released, and it’s chilling: the man, who was active in the neo-Nazi Nordic Resistance Movement (NRM), had stockpiled homemade bombs, semi-automatic weapons and parts manufactured with a 3D printer, as well as a huge cache of ammunition—all while engaging in online discussions about how to target schools for mass shootings.</p> <p>The farmhouse arsenal was powerfully reminiscent of the case of Norwegian terrorist Anders Breivik, who made similar preparations at a rural property over several years prior to his lethal terrorist attack in July 2011 that killed 69 young people at a summer camp and eight people in downtown Oslo when he detonated a truck bomb. Terrorism experts examining the Sweden case say it’s clear evidence that the threat of white-nationalist terrorism continues to spread around the globe.</p> <p>Contained within the farmhouse near the town of Falköping, as researcher Hugo Kaaman explained, was a weapons stockpile that actually dwarfed Breivik’s, suggesting the intensity of the young man—who has not been publicly identified—in his desire to replicate the white-nationalist hero’s horrific act.</p> <p>There were 50 tons of ammonium-nitrate fertilizer, the main component in the truck bombs ignited by Breivik and, before him, Oklahoma City mass killer Timothy McVeigh. He had multiple guns of various makes: semiautomatic and single-shot rifles and handguns, as well as multiple ammo magazines, bullet casings, and gunpowder. He also had a number of laser scopes, a bulletproof vest, camouflage clothing, a ballistic helmet, and a 3D printer that investigators believe he manufactured gun parts with.</p> <p>The man had set up a laboratory in his garage, but investigators also found that he had likely set up a pipe-bomb-making operation on his kitchen table, which had gunpowder on it. And being a devoted neo-Nazi, he also had a full library of far-right literature, as well as manuals on bomb-building and a handbook on armed struggle.</p> <p>When investigators went through his online activity, they found that the man had searched for posts and discussion threads about using various kinds of bombs, as well as proposals for attacks on schools. They believe, however, that he had not yet settled on a target.</p> <p>"The suspect has discussed the possibilities of carrying out attacks on a schoolyard, but there is no evidence that any specific school has been selected. It appears as if the suspect has 'got stuck' in the first planning phase," a statement from the Swedish Defense Research Agency read.</p> <p>The agency also noted that the man had expressed violent fantasies in various online forums, and promoted violent neo-Nazi beliefs, reflecting his membership in the NRM.</p> <p>Like a number of neo-Nazi terrorist organizations, the Nordic Resistance Movement is a product of Russia-based fascist activism—particularly the now-defunct Iron March forum, originally the brainchild of a Russian neo-Nazi who went by the nom de guerre Slavros, who created Iron March in 2009 as the rebranded online home of the fascist International Third Position forum.</p> <p>Iron March subsequently gave birth to the American neo-Nazi terrorist organization Atomwaffen Division, a number of whose members have been arrested by federal authorities for various acts of terrorism, as well as the explicitly fascist Patriot Front organization. Its impact has been global, however; among the organizations that emerged from it are the U.K.-based National Action, the Australia-based Antipodean Resistance, and the New Zealand-based Action Zealandia.</p> <p>NRM’s goal, according to its website, is to create an ethnically pure pan-Nordic nation that would include all Scandinavian nations, and to deport most non-ethnic Northern European residents. To do so, they say they intend to dismantle the “global Zionist elite”.</p> |

Although NRM doesn't explicitly call for violence, its members train in martial arts and knife attacks, and they will eagerly seek out confrontations.

"The Nordic Resistance Movement is a serious threat—members have attacked refugee centers and traveled to train with other Nazi groups over the years," Heidi Beirich of the Global Project Against Hate and Extremism told Daily Kos. "If the U.S. ever designates another group as a Special Terrorist Organization, I would say NRM should be at the top of the list."

NRM has been involved in a series of incidents in which members violently confronted minority groups and antifascists. In 2016 and 2017, members planted bombs outside a far-left cafe and a refugee center in Gothenburg, the latter of which injured an immigration officer. At a 2016 protest in Finland, an NMR member killed a man by kicking him in the chest, causing him to fall and hit his head.

The Swedish man arrested for the farmhouse arsenal also [has a previous conviction](#) for assault in February 2017 as a result of his NRM activism. At an NRM demonstration in Gothenburg, the man was handing out leaflets when a woman spat in his face. He punched her in the face, causing her to fall to the ground.

"This guy's track record with them at least led to the police to not sell a shotgun to him," Beirich observed, "but the prevalence of 3D printed guns among extremists is undermining that strategy. This is a reminder that bombs are quite popular among right-wing extremists as well."

The incident also is stark evidence that [the chain of terrorism](#) fueled by white-nationalist extremism that was initiated by Breivik—who himself was following in the footsteps of killers like McVeigh—continues to mount, notably with the [recent mass killing in Buffalo](#) that was inspired by the Christchurch, New Zealand, killer in 2019, who in turn was inspired by Breivik. It also demonstrates the increasing number of arrests of neo-Nazis around the world—including [the Austrian man arrested](#) in November 2021 with an arsenal similar to the Swedish man's—is not simply a coincidence.

"This case is another reminder that far-right extremists are capable of mass violence and if they aren't tracked and investigated we will get more mass attacks, as we've just seen in Buffalo," said Beirich. "And given the online nature of his postings, once again the web is a key to stopping this violence. As scary as this situation is, it's sadly becoming par for the course in terms of neo-Nazis and white supremacists. At least in this case, he was arrested before something horrific happened."

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| HEADLINE | 06/05 Inside waning days of al Qaeda |
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| SOURCE | https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/06/05/bin-laden-papers-al-qaeda-abbottabad-raid-review-jihadi-movement/?tpcc=recirc_latest062921 |
| GIST | <p>Eleven years ago, on May 2, 2011, a team of U.S. special operators led by Navy SEALs descended on al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden's compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan, killing him and several others in an operation that lasted 48 minutes. In the final 18 minutes of the raid, the SEALs set about collecting hard drives and other electronics for intelligence exploitation. The additional time spent gathering the materials proved valuable, as it likely led to the deaths of other key al Qaeda leaders in the weeks and months that followed.</p> <p>Since then, the U.S. intelligence community has gradually declassified the documents recovered in Abbottabad, releasing them to the public in stages. In November 2017, the CIA declassified nearly all of the more than 470,000 files in the collection. And now, we have the first comprehensive study of the archive in Nelly Lahoud's <i>The Bin Laden Papers: How the Abbottabad Raid Revealed the Truth About al-Qaeda, Its Leader and His Family</i>. The book provides a behind-the-scenes look at bin Laden and his organization in the decade between 9/11 and the Abbottabad raid—and the picture is anything but flattering.</p> |

Lahoud, a senior fellow at New America who previously taught at West Point's Combating Terrorism Center, pored over nearly 6,000 pages of Arabic-language documents that form bin Laden's internal correspondence with associates and his personal musings and reflections. As we learn, bin Laden communicated with other al Qaeda members by saving electronic files on SIM cards that were ferried to their destinations via a courier network. Uncovering that network ultimately led to bin Laden's demise, but for six years—from 2005 to 2011—it enabled him to communicate with his subordinates in Pakistan's Waziristan region and elsewhere.

Indeed, as Lahoud shows, bin Laden was fully in charge of al Qaeda until his death. But by that point, the al Qaeda he was in charge of was a far cry from its earlier strength.

Contrary to the image al Qaeda's leaders sought to project of the organization as a behemoth in the global jihadi movement—a perception shared by many Western government officials and terrorism analysts who often conflated al Qaeda with the larger global jihadi movement—Lahoud finds that it was severely weakened in the months after 9/11.

By 2004, Lahoud writes, the organization “was all but ruined.” Most of its senior leaders had been killed or detained, and that year, several commanders complained to bin Laden of al Qaeda's numerous “afflictions” and “troubles.” One noted the “weakness, failure, and aimlessness that befell us” after 9/11, while another highlighted the group's difficult financial situation and the fact that pressure from Pakistan had put a stop to plotting terrorist attacks abroad. Another lamented the deaths of 22 “brothers” and the capture of 600 more by the Pakistani authorities—a “horror movie” that was continuing to unfold.

Bin Laden wanted his lieutenants to concentrate their efforts on plotting international terrorist attacks, but the group was simply incapable. Lahoud finds no evidence that al Qaeda orchestrated the major attacks commonly attributed to it during this period, including the 2004 Madrid bombings and the 2005 London bombings. Media coverage of such events frequently [linked](#) them to al Qaeda, even when the link was tenuous at best. The only post-9/11 operation that bin Laden directed himself was a pair of attacks in Mombasa, Kenya, in November 2002, which targeted an Israeli-owned hotel and an Israeli jetliner, killing 13 people. Those attacks were planned prior to 9/11.

Bin Laden was evidently frustrated, Lahoud writes, with his group's inability to stage international attacks. He wanted his network to focus on attacking Americans exclusively, with the aim of achieving a “balance of terror” with the United States. In his view, only carrying out large-scale operations inside the United States could cause Americans to pressure their government into abandoning the Middle East. Forcing the United States to expel its military forces from the region was long bin Laden's goal, and his commitment to this “far enemy” strategy put him at odds with the regional jihadi groups operating under al Qaeda's name.

These al Qaeda affiliates began to emerge in 2003 and 2004, the best-known case being the Jordanian jihadi Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's group, Jamaat al-Tawhid wal-Jihad, which retitled itself al Qaeda in Iraq upon Zarqawi's swearing an oath of allegiance to bin Laden in late 2004. The tensions between al Qaeda and Zarqawi's group are [well-trodden territory](#), and Lahoud reaffirms the view that al Qaeda's central leadership was never able to control events on the ground in Iraq. By 2007, the Iraq-based group, now known as the Islamic State of Iraq, had seemingly cut off communication with al Qaeda entirely. Three years later, bin Laden suggested that it be retitled, perhaps to the Islamic Emirate of Iraq, but the fact was that he had no control over its operations.

Bin Laden had somewhat greater influence over the branches of al Qaeda in North Africa (al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb) and Yemen (al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula), but in these cases, too, Lahoud finds there were tensions and disagreements.

More broadly, bin Laden perceived a fundamental strategic disconnect between the regional branches with their locally oriented strategies and his own vision of global jihad. It was his position, as he wrote in 2010, that “[w]e shall only enter into a struggle with the local regimes when the leader of global *kufṛ* [i.e., America] is drained of its powers and is near collapse.” In other words, it was necessary first to attack and

defeat the United States as the precondition for being able to carry out an effective jihad against local rulers in the Middle East and North Africa that the group opposed. To the extent that the affiliates did not share this vision, he saw that they had become a “liability.”

Lahoud also sees little evidence of an alliance between al Qaeda and Iran, a country often [seen](#) by Western government officials and analysts as sustaining and supporting the organization in the years after 9/11. While it is true that Iran provided a sanctuary for those members who fled Afghanistan and Pakistan in late 2001, it is also the case, as Lahoud shows, that the relationship was fraught from 2002 onward. Iran detained a number of al Qaeda’s leaders and their families, which led some to engage in hunger strikes and attempt daring escapes. These actions, combined with al Qaeda’s kidnapping of Iranian officials for the purpose of brokering a prisoner exchange, ultimately led Iran to release most of the detainees by 2011.

Al Qaeda’s relationship with the Afghan Taliban was friendlier, though here, too, Lahoud finds evidence of mistrust. Bin Laden revered Mullah Omar, who led the Taliban until his death in 2013, but was deeply suspicious of those he saw as poised to succeed him. The Taliban, in bin Laden’s view, were divided between a “sincere” camp of pious leaders and a second camp in thrall to Pakistani intelligence. This division caused him to worry about the future of al Qaeda’s relationship with the group, particularly if the Taliban were to engage in direct negotiations with the United States—as they later would. As Lahoud suggests, bin Laden’s concerns ought to lead us to be skeptical of claims that the Taliban’s return to power [inevitably means](#) the revitalization of al Qaeda.

Informed observers will be inclined to question the sweeping nature of some of Lahoud’s conclusions. Yes, they will say, the Taliban have had their differences with al Qaeda, but the group nonetheless refused to repudiate and expel al Qaeda during the negotiations over the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan. Yes, the Iranians and al Qaeda have not always gotten along, but the fact remains that Iran provided shelter—and even [continues to do so](#)—to the terrorist network that attacked the United States on 9/11. Yes, al Qaeda has not always exercised control over its regional affiliates, but the affiliates raised its stature and spread its message of global jihad across the region. Yes, bin Laden was not personally involved in the Madrid and London bombings, but he nonetheless [inspired](#) the perpetrators by his words and his example.

There is some merit to all of these objections, but the overriding theme of *The Bin Laden Papers*—that the United States and its allies vastly overestimated the threat posed by al Qaeda as a centralized organization in the decade after 9/11—still rings true. Bin Laden’s al Qaeda was not a “Leviathan in the jihadi landscape” as many saw it to be, Lahoud writes, but rather a weakened organization marked by operational impotence and an inability to control the groups acting in its name.

The irony is that as al Qaeda languished, the larger jihadi movement was growing stronger and more popular. In 2013-14, as the Islamic State came to the fore, bin Laden’s successor at the helm of al Qaeda, Ayman al-Zawahiri, failed to put a stop to its rise. He commanded Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the first leader of the Islamic State, to leave Syria and confine his activities to Iraq, and Baghdadi rebuked him. Lahoud’s account helps put Baghdadi’s defiance of Zawahiri in context—al Qaeda was an organization past its prime that could easily be ignored.

Some may counter that al Qaeda has weathered the storm of the Islamic State reasonably well and that with the Taliban’s triumph it can credibly claim to have prevailed against the United States in Afghanistan. Yet given al Qaeda’s post-9/11 record as recounted by Lahoud, and its equally [feeble record](#) in the decade since, this narrative is too charitable.

This does not mean that Western governments should be complacent in the fight against al Qaeda. Preventing its revival should be a priority, and both the Taliban and Iran should be held to account for any support or freedom of movement they afford the group. Nor does it mean that the larger jihadi movement, including al Qaeda’s regional affiliates and the sprawling Islamic State network with branches from Nigeria to Pakistan, is any less of a threat.

Indeed, the movement remains a formidable and persistent challenge, though much more so for local states and peoples than for the West. The issue in question is solely whether al Qaeda as a centralized

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| | organization has been vastly overestimated. In <i>The Bin Laden Papers</i> , Lahoud makes a compelling case that it has. |
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| HEADLINE | 06/04 UN: AQ enjoying safe haven in Afghanistan |
| SOURCE | https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10884933/Al-Qaeda-enjoying-safe-haven-Afghanistan-Taliban-warns.html |
| GIST | <p>Al-Qaeda is enjoying a 'safe haven' in Afghanistan under the Taliban, a UN report has warned.</p> <p>The experts said in the intelligence report to the U.N. Security Council that the country could become a base for international terrorist attacks once again, The Guardian reported.</p> <p>However, they added neither IS nor al-Qaeda 'is believed to be capable of mounting international attacks before 2023 at the earliest, regardless of their intent or of whether the Taliban acts to restrain them.'</p> <p>Nonetheless, it said the presence of IS, al-Qaeda, and 'many other terrorist groups and fighters on Afghan soil' is raising concerns in neighboring countries and the wider international community.</p> <p>Since their takeover of Afghanistan last August as U.S. and NATO forces were in the final stages of their chaotic withdrawal from the country after 20 years, the Taliban 'have favored loyalty and seniority over competence, and their decision-making has been opaque and inconsistent.'</p> <p>In the report obtained Thursday, the panel monitoring sanctions against the Taliban said its leaders have appointed 41 men on the U.N. sanctions blacklist to the Cabinet and senior positions.</p> <p>They have also favored the country's dominant Pashtun ethnic group, alienating minority communities including ethnic Tajiks and Uzbeks.</p> <p>The Taliban's primary concern has been to consolidate control 'while seeking international recognition, to re-engage with the international financial system and to receive aid in order to deal with the growing economic and humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan,' the experts said.</p> <p>'Since taking power, however, there have been many factors creating internal tensions within the movement, leading to perceptions that the Taliban's governance has been chaotic, disjointed and prone to reversing policies and going back on promises.'</p> <p>As the Taliban struggle to transition from an insurgency to a governing body, they have been divided between pragmatists and hardliners who have gained the upper hand and want to turn the clock back to the group's harsh rule from 1996 until December 2001, when they were ousted from power by U.S. forces following the 9/11 attacks on the United States.</p> <p>To date, their efforts to win recognition and aid from Western nations have floundered, largely because they have not formed a more representative government, and have restricted the rights of girls to education beyond elementary school, and of women to work and travel without a male relative's oversight.</p> <p>'The central dilemma is how a movement with an inflexible ideology can engage with a society that has evolved during the past 20 years,' the experts said. 'Further stresses revolve around power, resources, and regional and ethnic divisions.'</p> <p>Despite these serious issues, the panel said the Taliban 'appear confident in their ability to control the country and "wait out" the international community to obtain eventual recognition of their government.'</p> <p>'They assess that, even if they make no significant concessions, the international community will ultimately recognize them as the government of Afghanistan, especially in the absence of a government in exile or significant internal resistance.'</p> |

So far, not a single country has officially recognized the Taliban, and there is growing international anger at its treatment of girls and women and its failure to keep its promise of forming an inclusive government.

There are also concerns about the Taliban's inability to keep its promise not to allow terrorist groups to operate in Afghanistan.

The panel said the Haqqani Network, a militant Islamist group with close ties to the Taliban, moved quickly after their takeover to gain control of key portfolios and ministries including interior, intelligence, passports and migration.

It now 'largely controls security in Afghanistan, including the security of the capital, Kabul.'

'The Haqqani Network is still regarded as having the closest links to al-Qaeda,' and the relationship between the Taliban and al-Qaeda also remains close.

The experts pointed to the reported presence of al-Qaeda's 'core leadership' in eastern Afghanistan including its leader Ayman al-Zawahri.

To counter the Islamic State, the report quoted an unidentified country as saying the Taliban have created three battalions of special forces called 'red units'.

The emergence of the National Resistance Front and Afghanistan Freedom Front comprising former Afghan security personnel 'has led the Taliban to adopt aggressive measures against populations suspected of supporting anti-Taliban operations.'

In April, it said National Resistance Front forces stepped up operations in Badakhshan, Baghlan, Jowzjan, Kunduz, Panjshir, Takhar and Samangan provinces.

The Afghan Freedom Front, which only emerged recently, 'has also claimed several attacks on Taliban bases in Badakhshan, Kandahar, Parwan and Samangan.'

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| HEADLINE | 06/05 Khalistani US groups evolve |
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| SOURCE | https://www.daijiworld.com/news/newsDisplay?newsID=965617 |
| GIST | <p>New York, Jun 5 (IANS): In the mid-1980s Khalistanis brazenly set up a terrorist training camp in the US and cooked up an elaborate plot to assassinate Rajiv Gandhi and Bhajan Lal, who was then the Haryana chief minister, when they visited the country.</p> <p>But in 1985 just before Gandhi's visit, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) busted the plotters, who had sought the help of a decorated former US Navy urban guerilla warfare expert.</p> <p>He had tipped off the FBI, which "successfully penetrated a plan (by the group) to develop a programme to train a group of Sikhs in the use of firearms and explosives", the then FBI chief, William Webster was quoted by The Los Angeles Times.</p> <p>An FBI special agent at that time, Edmund Pistey told the newspaper, "This may be a first incident of Sikh terrorism in the United States. What it shows is that we in the United States are not immune to terrorist acts happening here."</p> <p>The US put its guard on and the lesson was learnt.</p> <p>Since then, there have been no reports of domestic terrorism connected to Khalistanis, although there was at least one instance of funding terrorism abroad that has been uncovered by the US authorities -- with a Pakistan connection.</p> |

A Pakistani Canadian, Khalid Awan, was convicted in 2006 of funnelling money raised by Khalistanis in the US to the Khalistan Commando Force led by Pakistan-based Paramjit Singh Panjwar, according to the Justice Department.

Khalistanis, who operate in disparate groups, some networked, have instead been focusing on political action taking advantage of the freewheeling workings of US politics and the almost unfettered freedom of expression guaranteed by the US Constitution -- unlike any even in Europe.

But despite the change in tactics a report published by the conservative think tank Hudson Institute last year warned, "Groups agitating for Khalistan have the potential to cause problems, including the following: disrupt or damage India-US relations; become a vehicle for recruitment of terrorists and extremist agitators, and violate American laws by acting on behalf of Pakistan while pretending to act independently."

The report, "Pakistan's Destabilization Playbook: Khalistan Separatist Activism Within the US", prepared by a group of South Asia experts noted, "The recent increase in Khalistan-related anti-India activism within the US is occurring as the United States and India are collaborating to confront the rise of China, especially in the Indo-Pacific."

It added, "Some Sikh radical groups are still active in the New York area and in California. In addition to disseminating anti-India propaganda, the focus of these organisations is advocating the Khalistan cause, and to secure support they target local politicians, US think tanks, and human rights activists."

The Khalistani groups also have connections to Kashmiri separatist groups.

The International Terrorism Report said that "the Khalistan movement is reportedly backed by Pakistan".

It cited the participation of a representative of the World Sikh Parliament in a webinar sponsored by a Pakistani Kashmiri outfit as an example "of Khalistan and Kashmir separatist movement advocates joining hands in 'global solidarity' to attack the common enemy - India".

It said the online event was sponsored by Justice for All whose parent company Sound Vision, is an offshoot of the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA) that advocates Kashmiri separatism.

The SFJ has openly participated alongside Kashmiri separatists in protests against India in New York and elsewhere.

The Hudson Institute report said that there were "fifty-five interlinked Kashmiri and Khalistani groups currently operating within the United States".

As an example of their links, it cited Stand With Kashmir organising in December 2019 along with, "the radical Sikh group Organization for Minorities of India (OFMI) and the Indian American Muslim Council (IAMC)" a protest against India's Citizenship Amendment Act.

For a while, Khalistanis seemed to ride high needling India at the Congressional level with the strong support of about a dozen politicians from both parties.

But that level of backing has waned, and now they have switched to working at the local levels and trying to make a common cause with Islamic groups, Pakistani Kashmiris and radical African Americans.

The Sikh community as a whole in the US is also facing the problem of perception because of their turbans that erroneously associates them with Islamic terrorists whose leaders like Osama bin Laden were seen in the media wearing turbans, though of different types.

The mainstream Sikh organisations have run campaigns to dispel these notions and present the members of the faith as a distinct, public service-oriented, law-abiding community.

That is a further incentive for Khalistanis to lay off domestic terrorism, even if only directed at Indian targets.

Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) led by lawyer Gurpatwant Singh Pannun is now the main driver of the Khalistan movement in the US, pushing both the Khalistan "Referendum" and what are characterised as human rights-oriented campaigns.

Pannun, who operates from the New York area and travels to Europe and elsewhere for his campaigns, is a wanted man in India.

Before him, there was Gurmit Singh Aulakh, a genetics scientist who founded the Council of Khalistan and styled himself the "President", Khalistan.

Starting in 1985, his lobbying got the support of about a dozen members of the House of Representatives and a Senator to push legislation against India.

Most were Republicans with strong anti-communist sentiments and he played on India's closeness at that time to the Soviet Union that was fighting the US-backed Taliban.

But Edolphus Towns, an influential Democrat, who tried to get India declared a "terrorist state" and had nominated Aulakh for the Nobel Peace Prize, was one of at least five Representatives from his party.

Their efforts got some propaganda mileage for Aulakh and needled the Indian government, which took them more seriously than they deserved given the nature of US politics where fringe campaigns can manipulate some politicians using ideology, donations and promise of electoral support and be helped by the bartering of support among legislators.

For example, The Washington Post reported that Burton's 1966 campaign received nearly a quarter of the individual donations from the US Sikh and Kashmiri communities.

Republican Burton had referred to Khalistan as if it were an independent nation in statements in the House.

Burton was embarrassed when it was revealed in court documents in 2011 that he had received funds from Pakistani Americans, who had been charged by a federal prosecutor with being conduits for Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence illegally funding the US politicians.

One of them was Ghulam Nabi Fai, the head of the Kashmir American Council, who had been seen with Khalistanis, and was sentenced to two years in prison for violations of the US laws.

A turning point in the level of Congressional support was the sound defeat in 1997 of a House resolution calling for a plebiscite in India that was opposed by 342 members, with 82 supporting.

Another marker of change was Republican Senator Jesse Helms, who had been a virulently anti-India supporter of Khalistan, beginning to soften his stand that year.

Helms, who had headed the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, ultimately became a strong supporter of US-India ties after outreach by Indian groups like the Indian American Forum for Political Education, and realising the strategic value of the nation to the US.

Pannun, who has a keen legal mind and political sophistication has adapted the Khalistani strategies to work at two levels: Pushing the Khalistani cause as a human rights issue while joining with other groups, and working at the local levels, where it is easier to push an agenda on less sophisticated politicians pretending to be foreign policy leaders.

For image building, he has filed cases in the US against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Congress Party leader Sonia Gandhi and former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath -- but without success.

This also shows a subtle shift in who were in the Khalistani's cross-hairs: While the Congress had been the prime target because of the 1984 Golden Temple army incursion and the pogroms after Indira Gandhi's assassination, they now go mainly after the RSS and BJP, hoping to take advantage of the antipathy towards the two organisations among liberals, Muslims and some Christians.

In trying to broaden its appeal to the liberals and African Americans, the Hudson Institute report noted, for example, that pro-Khalistan activists "appropriated imagery and slogans from the Black Lives Matter movement, whose aim is to redress systemic and structural white supremacy in the United States".

That's an attempt at creating a common bond of victimhood.

The SFJ listed on its website African American civil rights leader Jesse Jackson as the keynote speaker at its rally in 2019 in Washington.

For expressions of solidarity with radical African Americans, some Khalistanis have made Mahatma Gandhi's early statements about Africans in South Africa a flashpoint.

They have targeted statues of Gandhi around the US -- the most visible signs of Indian influence -- defacing them coast to coast.

The linkage was clearly seen in Davis, California, where Sikhs joined by some African Americans had demanded the removal of the Gandhi statue there in 2020 and a year later it was found sawed off at the neck and feet.

Khalistanis found for co-option a readymade issue that appealed to the liberals and radicals in the farmers' agitation last year, claiming for themselves the support for the agitation by cultural, political and environmental figures, many of whom were clueless about the changes in laws and regulations opening up agricultural markets.

They are, however, silent on the similar market conditions in their own countries.

While support for Khalistan at the national level has been set back because of a number of factors, including the retirement or death of its backers in Congress, the recognition of India's strategic value, the abhorrence of terrorism after 9/11 and the anti-communist fervour dissipating, Khalistanis have been able in some places to follow the Kashmiri separatist tactic and pick up expressions of support.

These may have some publicity value for the Khalistanis and annoy India, but have no influence beyond the town halls and state assemblies.

The Connecticut legislature offered Khalistan a recognition of sorts in April by congratulating the World Sikh Parliament on the anniversary of what is billed as the "declaration of Sikh Independence".

Holyoke, Massachusetts, and Norwich, Connecticut, hoisted the Khalistan flag at the city halls.

Local politicians playing at being statesmen are easily beguiled into making ill-informed forays into international affairs, not just by Khalistanis, but by many other special interests.

The sponsors of these moves may not be able to find Punjab on a map, leave alone India.

Even Helms once introduced Benazir Bhutto as the Prime Minister of India on the Senate floor -- either a Freudian slip or plain ignorance.

There is still a possibility that pro-Islamist members of Congress like Ilhan Omar -- an advocate of the Pakistani line on Kashmir -- could take up the Khalistani cause.

But as on most issues, they would remain isolated from the mainstream on this also.

In the current climate critical of Russia and China, the SFJ is also handicapped by its support for the Chinese aggression and its appeal to Russia.

Pannun had written to China's President Xi Jinping "to condemn India's violent aggression causing the death of several soldiers of China at the Ladakh border" during the 2020 border confrontation.

He had also written to Russia's President Vladimir Putin asking for support.

There are other Khalistani organisations that have been identified in the Hudson Institute report.

One of them is the SADA USA, the overseas branch of the Shiromani Akali Dal (Amritsar), whose youth wing disrupted a celebration of BR Ambedkar's birth anniversary celebrations at the United Nations in 2018.

The report gave an insight into the intricate web around the SFJ in the US.

It said the SFJ "operates a number of spin-off groups and media outlets, including US Media International, Khabardar Punjab TV, and new campaign organisations such as the Kashmir Khalistan Referendum Front (KKRF)."

It added, "Along with the Khalistan Affairs Center (KAC), Sikhs for Justice is also closely involved with Global Sikh Affairs Media, which is controlled by the Centre's head, Amarjit Singh, and runs the radical Khalistani news channel, TV84."

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| HEADLINE | 06/04 Evolving nature of UK terrorist threat |
| SOURCE | https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/jun/04/uk-warned-it-is-failing-to-adapt-as-terror-threat-shifts-from-groups-to-lone-attackers |
| GIST | <p>Psychologists and behavioural scientists should be deployed more frequently to counter-terrorism operations as the number of neurodivergent individuals under investigation rises, a watchdog has advised.</p> <p>The government's independent reviewer of terrorism legislation told the <i>Observer</i> that evaluating the threat from individuals with conditions like autism was becoming an increasingly prevalent challenge. Jonathan Hall QC said: "You are seeing a lot more neurodivergence and mental health coming into terrorist investigations, and that's also having an impact on deradicalisation programmes.</p> <p>"When you see [counter-terrorism] officials trying to work out what the behaviour of a person means – and what might counteract it – it's odd not to have a psychologist present."</p> <p>In an interview to mark the evolving nature of the UK's terrorist threat since the London Bridge and Borough Market attack five years ago, he said the shift from recognised terror groups such as al-Qaida or the far-right National Action to a leaderless resistance model meant a new type of individual was being drawn into terrorism.</p> <p>"Old-school terrorist groups like the IRA wouldn't want to employ people who are mentally ill or neurodivergent; they wouldn't want people who might let the side down, who might give away secrets or be weak soldiers," said Hall, who reports to the Home Office on the working and development of the often contentious legislative codes against terrorism.</p> |

“This leaderless resistance, self-initiating stuff – facilitated by the internet – is a really profound move away from groups,” he added.

The recent US mass shootings in the US, particularly in Buffalo, New York and [Uvalde, Texas](#), Hall said, underscored the threat from lone attackers facing the UK.

While the Buffalo gunman associated himself with rightwing terrorist ideology online and the Uvalde killer did not, Hall said it was legitimate to ask how different they were. “Both chose to become shooters, emulating a pattern of behaviour that is widely glorified online. Whether you apply a terrorist label or not, they had the same capacity for violence.”

On Thursday, the teenage gunman accused of shooting 10 people dead in a Buffalo supermarket was [charged with domestic terrorism](#).

The UK’s security services are monitoring a decline in traditional ideological motives for potential terrorists, raising questions over how fixated the UK’s counterterrorism strategy should be on such definitions. “You need to ask the hard question: do we care about ideology if it doesn’t result in violence? There may be issues around social cohesion and British values, but that’s not terrorism.”

A landmark review of the [government’s counter-extremism strategy, Prevent](#), is expected to advocate a greater focus on Islamism, a recommendation that security services note appears at odds with a documented rise in “mixed, unstable or unclear” ideologies.

In 2017, the UK terrorist threat seemed more clearcut when a series of attacks at Westminster Bridge, [Manchester Arena](#), London Bridge, Finsbury Park Mosque and Parsons Green were acts of uncomplicated Islamist or rightwing terrorism.

Two years later, an [attack near London Bridge by Usman Khan](#), who had participated in two Home Office deradicalisation programmes, began a debate on released terrorist offenders.

Hall conceded that no “off-the-shelf” programme to deradicalise terrorists had yet been devised, saying that successes or failures often relied on the personalities of the terrorist and those attempting to deprogramme them. “It’s impossible because you’re dealing with human nature. No one in the world has said we’ve now got peer-reviewed evidence as to what works and we’re administering it,” said Hall, who interviews government officials, ministers, security and intelligence officers and police to assess terrorism laws.

However, he warned that since Khan killed [Jack Merritt and Saskia Jones](#) while at a prisoners’ rehabilitation conference in November 2019, many counter-terrorism officials were wary of being “gamed” by those pretending to be deradicalised while secretly harbouring an intention to commit terrorist attacks. “There’s strong scepticism about being gamed these days, and this means it’s hard for people to prove they are not a terrorist. It makes it hard for individuals to melt back into society in a good way.”

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| HEADLINE | 06/05 TTP agrees to extend truce, dialogue |
| SOURCE | https://www.brecorder.com/news/40177911 |
| GIST | <p>ISLAMABAD: Talks between government of Pakistan’s tasked tribal elders and the outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) concluded on Friday with no major progress on contentious demands put forward by the two sides other than an agreement to extend the ceasefire and continue peace talks.</p> <p>Informed sources within the tribal elders, who on Friday returned to the country after holding several rounds of talks with the TTP in Kabul, told Business Recorder that they found the TTP leadership willing to continue the talks until rederessal of reservations on certain contentious demands.</p> <p>Among other demands, retaining the independent status of tribal areas – reversal of the FATA merger with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa – implementation of Sharia laws across Pakistan or at least in areas under their</p> |

previous influence, are some crucial demands put forward by the TTP that would be further negotiated between the two sides, the sources added.

“I can only confirm that there has been no major breakthrough in the talks, but they (TTP) agreed to extend the ceasefire till dialogue continues and some conclusion is achieved,” a reliable informed source told this correspondent who requested anonymity as the tribal elders engaged in talks with the TTP have been asked not to share details with the media.

The government of Pakistan sent a 50-member delegation comprising tribal elders from 13 districts and some sitting and former parliamentarians from the merged tribal districts to Kabul on May 31, 2022.

The members of the tribal Jirga held several rounds of talks with the TTP negotiating team for three to four days in Kabul before returning to Peshawar on Friday where they gave a detailed briefing to senior government officials dealing with the ongoing peace talks with the TTP. The talks are being directly moderated and supervised by interim Interior Minister of Afghanistan Sirajuddin Haqqani who is also chief of the Haqqani Network, as well as by the Afghan intelligence chief Abdul Haq Wasiq.

“Although, talks were held in a positive atmosphere, the TTP needs to show flexibility,” said a tribal Jirga member on condition of anonymity who also stated that the TTP agreed to extend the ceasefire while the talk process is in place.

Another member of the tribal Jirga claimed that the TTP has agreed to changing the organization’s name and laying down arms prior to returning to their native towns in Pakistan when and as the final peace truce is brokered with the government of Pakistan.

However, this was not confirmed by the previous member who spoke to Business Recorder, saying he cannot confirm anything that was not agreed during the talks between the tribal elders and the TTP.

He further stated that the TTP was willing to hold more rounds of talks on their demands such as implementation of Islamic laws, laying down arms prior to their return to the country and dismantling ties with other militant organizations including the Islamic State – Khorasan (IS-K) also known as Daesh-Khorasan active in the region particularly in Afghanistan.

The tribal Jirga, which held talks with the TTP leadership, was led by former Senator Maulana Saleh Shah and comprised of representatives from 13-tribal districts, including former governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Engineer Shaukatullah Khan and former MNA Akhonzada Chittan from Bajaur, former federal minister Ghazi Gulab Jamal from Orakzai tribal district, ex-MNA from Khyber tribal district Shah Ji Gull Afridi, chairman Senate Standing Committee on States and Frontier Regions Senator Hilal-ur-Rehman from Mohmand tribal district, besides elders from other districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including from Swat, Hangu, North and South Waziristan.

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| HEADLINE | 06/05 Blast kills 2 UN peacekeepers in Mali |
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| SOURCE | https://www.nwaonline.com/news/2022/jun/05/blast-kills-2-un-peacekeepers-on-mali-road-6th/?news-world |
| GIST | <p>UNITED NATIONS -- Two U.N. peacekeepers were killed Friday when their armored personnel carrier hit an improvised explosive device in central Mali in the sixth incident in less than two weeks targeting the U.N. mission in the West African nation that has faced a decade-long Islamic insurgency.</p> <p>U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said the device that killed the Egyptian peacekeepers and wounded one other was planted on a road outside the town of Douentza in the Mopti region.</p> <p>Their APC was escorting a civilian convoy and was on its way from Douentza to Timbuktu when it hit the device, he said.</p> <p>"The intent is to disrupt the lives of the Malian people, to disrupt transport, to disrupt security," Dujarric said. "These roads are used by civilians, civilian trucks, civilian buses, but also by the security forces,</p> |

whether it's the Malian army or U.N. peacekeepers ... [who] have been victims over and over again of improvised explosive devices."

It was the sixth incident in which a U.N. peacekeeping mission convoy was hit since May 22 and the second fatal attack on a convoy [that] week, the U.N. spokesman said.

A U.N. peacekeeping convoy was attacked by suspected terrorists in the northern Kidal region on Wednesday and a Jordanian peacekeeper was killed and three other Jordanians were wounded. Dujarric said the supply convoy came under sustained fire for about an hour from attackers who used small arms and rocket launchers.

Mali has been in turmoil since a 2012 uprising prompted mutinous soldiers to overthrow the president. The power vacuum that resulted ultimately led to an Islamic insurgency and a French-led war that ousted the jihadists from power in 2013. But insurgents remain active and extremist groups affiliated with al-Qaida and the Islamic State group have moved from the arid north to more populated central Mali since 2015, stoking animosity and violence between ethnic groups in the region.

Mali's current ruling junta seized power in August 2020, and in April the junta leaders said a transition to civilian, democratic rule would take at least two years.

The U.N. Security Council and U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres strongly condemned Friday's attack in separate statements and called on Mali's transitional government to swiftly identify the perpetrators and bring them to justice. They both underlined that attacks on peacekeepers may constitute war crimes.

The secretary-general "pays tribute to the determination and the courage of peacekeepers, who continue to implement their mandates in extremely challenging circumstances in support of the people of Mali," U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

The Security Council stressed that involvement in planning, directing, sponsoring or conducting attacks against peacekeepers also constitutes a basis for U.N. sanctions.

Council members "expressed their concern about the security situation in Mali and the transnational dimension of the terrorist threat in the Sahel region" and urged full implementation of a 2015 peace agreement "without further delay."

The U.N. mission says more than 255 of its peacekeepers and personnel have died since 2013, making Mali the deadliest of the U.N.'s dozen peacekeeping missions worldwide.

"The word grateful isn't strong enough to express how we feel toward those member states which continue to provide many peacekeepers around the world," Dujarric said. "Egyptians, Jordanians, Chadians and others have given their lives for the people of Mali for the cause of peace and we're eternally grateful for their continued support."

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Suspicious, Unusual

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| HEADLINE | 06/06 'Hidden world' marine life under Antarctic |
| SOURCE | https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/06/hidden-world-of-marine-life-discovered-in-antarctic-river-under-ice |
| GIST | Beneath a vast Antarctic ice shelf, in a cathedral-like cavern hundreds of metres high, are swarms of little shrimp-like creatures in a newly discovered underwater ecosystem that, until recently, had remained an ice-locked secret. |

A team of scientists from [New Zealand](#) discovered the ecosystem 500 metres below the ice in a suspected estuary, hundreds of kilometres from the edge of the Ross Ice Shelf.

Antarctica New Zealand supported researchers from universities in Wellington, Auckland and Otago, the National Institute of Water and Atmospherics (Niwa) and Geological and Nuclear Sciences to investigate what role the estuary could play in climate-induced ice-shelf melt.

But when they drilled down through the ice and into the river, their camera was swarmed by amphipods, little creatures from the same lineage as lobsters, crabs and mites.

“For a while, we thought something was wrong with the camera, but when the focus improved, we noticed a swarm of arthropods around 5mm in size,” said Niwa’s Craig Stevens.

“We’ve done experiments in other parts of the ice shelf and thought we had a handle on things, but this time big surprises were thrown up.”

While there was a climate change motivation for the work, there was an element of discovery on the expedition, Stevens said.

“We were jumping up and down because having all those animals swimming around our equipment means that there’s clearly an important ecosystem there.”

The project’s lead, Huw Horgan from Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington, was the first to spot the estuary, after spying a groove in the ice while studying satellite imagery of the Ross Ice Shelf.

Researchers have been aware of a network of hidden freshwater lakes and rivers below the Antarctic ice sheets for some time but they have yet to be directly surveyed, Horgan said.

“Getting to observe and sample this river was like being the first to enter a hidden world.”

Instruments had been left in the river to observe its behaviour, he said, while lab researchers would investigate what makes the water unique.

The team’s findings extended further – it had just deployed its mooring a few days before the enormous eruption of Tongan volcano Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha’apai. The team’s instruments detected a significant pressure change as the tsunami made its way through the cavity.

Seeing the eruption’s effects reminded Stevens just how connected the planet is. “Here we are, in a forgotten corner of the world, seeing real-time influences from events that felt worlds away. It was quite remarkable.”

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| HEADLINE | 06/05 Eastern WA: as water becomes more scarce |
| SOURCE | https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/environment/whats-in-store-for-eastern-wa-as-water-becomes-more-scarce-throughout-the-west/ |
| GIST | <p>Even in late May, when T-shirts take over and thermostats hit a balmy 70 degrees, patches of snow cling to the top of Mount Spokane.</p> <p>Snow persists on many Pacific Northwest mountains well into summer. It acts as a natural reservoir, melting as the weather warms and watering the thirsty low country when rains are few and far between.</p> <p>Washington relies on mountain snowpack, especially during the hottest, driest months. While it may seem like a constant, snowpack is shrinking and climate projections suggest it will keep shrinking in the coming decades. As the reservoir diminishes, parts of the state will have to adapt. Water will be harder to come by.</p> |

“There’s going to be more of it when we don’t need it as much, and maybe less of it when we need it more,” said Nick Bond, the state climatologist and a researcher at the University of Washington.

States south of Washington have already had to adjust to life with less water as unprecedented drought batters the West.

The federal government is paying some California and Arizona farmers to leave their ground fallow as a water-saving measure. In 2021, the Nevada Legislature passed a law banning nonfunctional grass in the southern part of the state. Lake Mead, the modern marvel along the Colorado River that provides water to nearly 20 million people, has never been lower since the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation created it in the 1930s.

Eastern Washington isn’t facing the same extreme water shortages wreaking havoc in the desert southwest, but dry years have become a near constant. Even now, after a cool, wet spring, the U.S. Drought Monitor places most of Washington east of the Cascades in moderate to severe drought.

Last year’s lack of rain and record heat led to historically low yields for Palouse wheat growers. Drought has helped fuel massive fires that have destroyed wildlife habitat, incinerated homes and made smoke an annual expectation. Water concerns have trickled into local government — just last month, the Spokane City Council passed an ordinance banning lawn watering this summer during peak hours.

Experts say the years of drought won’t be fleeting. Thanks to climate change, the West and Washington will slowly become hotter and drier.

“Everyone thinks Washington is Seattle on a rainy day and that’s just not true,” said Mary Verner, manager of the state Department of Ecology’s water resources program and a former Spokane mayor. “Water is increasingly scarce.”

Fewer snowflakes, more raindrops

The region’s farmers have been talking about summertime water shortages for 180 years.

Although the concern is old and familiar, the state’s relatively fortunate compared to places such as California, Nevada and Arizona.

“We just live in a much different climate than they do,” said Jeff Marti, the Department of Ecology’s drought coordinator. “They’re in a bona fide desert, no doubt about it, and decided to plop millions of people down there.”

Massive water diversion and storage projects have turned parts of the desert into fertile farmland and allowed for the growth of major cities.

Los Angeles, Las Vegas and Phoenix can only support millions of people because governments rerouted vast quantities of water — entire rivers and lakes in some cases — to areas that couldn’t naturally support a tiny fraction of today’s population.

In the southwest, too many people are relying on too little water from the Colorado River and other watersheds. Marti compared it to sharing slices of a pie. When governments worked out how to parcel out the Colorado River, they overestimated how much water was available because the previous decades had been unusually wet.

“The pie wasn’t really that large, but everyone thinks they’re entitled to the same slice,” he explained.

Eastern Washington’s water challenges are fundamentally different. The state doesn’t rely much on artificial storage.

“We’re not anticipating the same kind of water shortages that are really starting to rear their ugly head in California, Arizona, Nevada,” said Bond, the state climatologist.

The Inland Northwest doesn’t have to find water for nearly as many people. For comparison, more people live in the Las Vegas metro area than in all of Eastern Washington combined.

Experts say decline in spring snowpack, not the overallocation of a specific river or the draining of human-made reservoirs, is the biggest worry for the Pacific Northwest.

Snowpack is already decreasing. Between 1955 — when many southwest measurement sites were established — and 2020, snowpack in the West declined by about 20%, according to data from the Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service. Washington snowpack fell by about 30%.

“The general direction of the trend is the same regardless of the start date,” the Environmental Protection Agency wrote in a recent snowpack analysis.

Climate projections say snowpack will continue to decline in the coming decades, even though snowfall, precipitation and temperature will fluctuate from year to year.

As the planet warms and the climate changes, total precipitation in Washington may rise slightly.

More of it will likely fall as rain, reducing the northwest’s natural snowpack reservoir, and fewer rains will come in the summer. Snowpack in the highest, coldest areas might not be affected, but snow that straddles the freezing line will.

Overall, Washington won’t have less water. Projections suggest flows on the Columbia River, tied in part to snowpack in the Canadian Rockies, will be higher on average.

But water’s needed most in the hottest months, when “the skies turn off and the sprinklers turn on,” drought coordinator Marti said. A shrinking snowpack, that melts earlier in the year, will lead to a smaller supply when demand’s highest.

“If it isn’t captured, it’s not going to be around in the spring or summer,” Marti said, “which is when we really need it.”

Stunted wheat, shriveled apples

How has drought affected Washington so far?

Eastern Washington agriculture has already seen significant impacts from drought.

Last spring was the second driest in Spokane’s recorded history. The lack of moisture, combined with record-breaking temperatures, stunted the growth of dry land wheat and led to one of the worst crops for Eastern Washington farmers since the 1970s.

Central Washington fruit growers, who farm irrigated ground, struggled as the heat wave and lack of rain shriveled some apples and cherries.

Farmers expect 2022 to go better than 2021, but it won’t be easy for all.

Producers in the Okanogan Irrigation District, the water supplier for about 5,000 acres of agricultural land near Omak, are bracing for a lean water year.

The district’s two reservoirs, Conconully Reservoir and Salmon Lake, are at about 44% capacity.

Brad Armstrong, the district's manager, explained that farmers used more water than normal last year to keep their fruit from withering in 100 degree temperatures. Winter snowfall wasn't enough to refill the reservoirs. With the reservoirs low, the district will have to pump more water, which requires electricity and raises costs.

"We've got to try to conserve as much as we can," Armstrong said.

Agriculture has been readying for less water. Throughout the West, irrigation systems have become increasingly efficient. Some growers may switch to more drought-resistant crops, too.

"Those guys aren't stupid," Bond said. "They know what's happening; that they're going to have to adapt."

Drought also impacts wildlife.

Fish, especially salmon, suffer when streams get low. Shallower water tends to heat up quicker.

"We're just seeing more mortality of native, cold-water fishes," said Harriet Morgan, climate change coordinator for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Warmer waters can disrupt salmon spawning.

"They won't continue into natal streams," Morgan said. "The warm temperatures essentially act as a physical barrier."

Reduction of snowpack could reduce the range of several species often found at higher elevations, such as Canada lynx and wolverines.

A drier climate can hurt wildlife in less obvious ways. Higher temperatures, the loss of snowpack and fewer summer rains help lengthen the fire season. Massive wildfires, burning bigger and hotter than they did historically, have damaged or destroyed millions of acres of critical habitat.

Eastern Washington's shrub-steppe ecosystem, which evolved with relatively infrequent fire, has been hit especially hard. Wildfires continue to chip away at the sagebrush sea, each one removing some of the last remaining habitat for sagebrush-reliant species, such as sage grouse and pygmy rabbits.

James Pass, a silviculturist for the U.S. Forest Service who works on the Colville National Forest, said it's difficult to pinpoint precisely how the drought has affected Inland Northwest trees, although anecdotally it looks like some died last summer.

In general, many of the West's forests are overgrown after more than a century of fire suppression. Pass said there are simply too many trees in many forests, all sucking up water like straws in a drink.

Forest conditions, in many instances, are already far from ideal and adding in drought can increase susceptibility to disease.

"Now you're adding another stressor on top of existing stressors," Pass said.

Reasons for optimism

Water scarcity probably won't affect everyone equally.

Jonathan Yoder, a Washington State University economics professor and director of the state's Water Research Center, said that while the impacts of climate change are regional, the impacts of water scarcity tend to be local. Drought will hit individual watersheds differently.

Still, a decline in water availability could have broad financial implications.

“Having water where we want, when we want it, may become a little more expensive than it has been in the past, in relative terms,” Yoder said.

Yoder said Eastern Washington can mitigate the effects of drought.

“There is a lot we can do to adapt to changes in water security, water availability,” he said.

More efficient technologies and shifting habits can save water. As populations have grown, many cities have managed to cut back or maintain their overall use by decreasing the amount needed by each resident.

Investments in water storage can improve the likelihood of a stable supply during dry times. The problem, Yoder said, is most of the obvious investments, the “low-hanging fruit,” have already been made. Finding and building new storage systems will be expensive.

Many governments have been investing in water for years. Idaho has spent millions of dollars building infrastructure to replenish the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer, which underlies the Snake River in the southern part of the state.

Idaho is taking water from the Snake River in winter, when it isn’t needed for agriculture, and storing it in human-made lakes. The water in those lakes filters into the ground, recharging the depleted aquifer. The state hopes the project will make southern Idaho, the country’s largest potato-producing region and a dairy mecca, more resilient.

Washington’s Yakima Basin Integrated Plan is a wide-ranging effort to boost water security through a long list of proposals. Stakeholders are considering everything from fish passage and groundwater storage projects, to new water right transfer rules and conservation efforts. The state Legislature first set aside funding in 2013 for the 30-year plan.

Yoder said he’s optimistic that Washington can weather a drier future.

“When resources become clearly important,” he said, “often we’re able to rise to the occasion.”

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| HEADLINE | 06/05 Colorado to lose snow, look like Arizona? |
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| SOURCE | https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/colorado-will-lose-half-its-snow-by-2080-and-look-more-like-arizona-federal-scientists-conclude/ |
| GIST | <p>Parts of Colorado, Wyoming and Utah are drying out due to climate-driven changes in stream flows, and these states will shift to become more like the most arid states of the Southwest, federal researchers found in a scientific study published last week.</p> <p>The lead author of the study said Colorado will experience a 50% to 60% reduction in snow by 2080.</p> <p>“We’re not saying Colorado is going to become a desert. But we see increased aridity moving forward,” said hydrologist Katrina Bennett at the federal government’s Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico.</p> <p>The researchers used an artificial intelligence “machine learning” system that allowed them to analyze massive amounts of data collected over 30 years including soil moisture, volumes of water in streams, evapotranspiration rates, temperature and precipitation across the varying landscapes within the Colorado River Basin. Tracking the West’s hydrology on such a scale previously would have taken years.</p> <p>They concluded that large losses of snow will transform high elevation areas and that the phenomenon of melting snow that creates water will disappear entirely in some areas as temperatures rise.</p> |

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| | <p>The study was published, following peer review, in the journal Earth and Space Science and distributed Thursday by officials at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.</p> <p>For Colorado and surrounding “upper basin” states, the scientists projected wide shrinking of snow, leading to less spring snow melting followed by decreasing water in streams, especially in the Rocky Mountains. The study predicted, in particular, markedly increased aridity along the Green River as it flows near the borders of Colorado, Utah and Wyoming.</p> <p>“In some parts of Colorado, we will see a higher-elevation preservation of snowpack, because it is so high,” Bennett said, citing the mountains above Leadville in central-western Colorado.</p> <p>“But other areas like the San Juan Mountains were seen to be losing snowpack significantly,” she said.</p> <p>The unsupervised machine-learning system greatly accelerates analysis of weather and hydrology data, giving a robust new way of incorporating vast data to anticipate changes and track trends. Bennett said she and her colleagues plan to apply their system to analyze the drought-prone Rio Grande River Basin covering southern Colorado, New Mexico and Texas.</p> <p>The Colorado River Basin encompasses a seven-state area from sea level at the Gulf of California to mountain peaks higher than 14,000 feet in Colorado. Water in the basin supplies food growers including those who produce a large portion of the nation’s fruits and vegetables. Expanding cities — including Albuquerque, Denver, Colorado Springs, Los Angeles, Salt Lake City, San Diego and Santa Fe — rely on water diverted from the river and its tributaries to survive.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/04 Climate study: Siberia tundra could vanish |
| SOURCE | https://www.washingtonpost.com/science/2022/06/04/siberia-tundra-climate-change-wildfires/ |
| GIST | <p>What comes to mind when you think of Siberia?</p> <p>If you associate a vast tundra with the massive northeastern region in Russia, you’re not alone. Across nearly 2,500 miles of unbroken wilderness, the Arctic tundra is a unique and unexpectedly abundant ecosystem.</p> <p>But that could change if human-caused global warming goes unchecked, researchers warn. And if the world doesn’t adopt consistent measures to protect the climate, they write, the tundra could disappear completely.</p> <p>The dire prediction is reported in a study in eLife that simulates how a changing climate would affect the boundary between the tundra and the forests that border it. When researchers modeled how the forests would respond to climate change, they found what they call an “invasion of forests under global warming.” They predict that a climb in summer temperatures would cause the trees’ habitat to creep northward, overtaking the tundra and threatening both the landscape and its species.</p> <p>The model simulated the life cycle of thousands of individual trees and how they would probably respond to warmer air temperatures. Researchers studied everything from the density of the trees to their growth, seed production and dispersal, and their aging and death.</p> <p>Trees are particularly susceptible to warm summer temperatures, so the team looked at how they’d fare if summers became between 1.2°C and 5°C (34 and 41°F) warmer.</p> <p>The researchers predict the tree line will advance more than 18 miles every decade. And although the trees’ migration will probably lag behind warming by about a century, the researchers warn that only ambitious measures to tackle climate change can protect the tundra.</p> |

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| | <p>Tundras look barren, but their harsh conditions play host to all kinds of plants and animals, even bumblebees and reindeer. Even if they're not completely lost, the researchers say, the unbroken tundra could split in two, shrinking significantly as more and more trees encroach.</p> <p>And even with consistent climate protection policies, they say it's possible that just 30 percent of Siberia's tundra will survive by mid-millennium.</p> <p>"At this point, it's a matter of life and death for the Siberian tundra," Eva Klebelsberg, a project manager at WWF Germany, said in a news release. "Larger areas can only be saved with very ambitious climate protection targets."</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/04 More schools close early for 'heat days' |
| SOURCE | https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2022/06/04/school-heat-days-climate-change/ |
| GIST | <p>Temperatures kept rising in Philadelphia and Baltimore. Finally, it was just too hot to keep students in classrooms without air conditioning. On Tuesday, both systems let students out early.</p> <p>For Principal Richard M. Gordon IV, it was just another early-summer day in the halls of his West Philadelphia high school, where sweltering temperatures, high humidity and a lack of ventilation made classrooms so uncomfortable that students could barely sit still.</p> <p>"Can I honestly say effective learning is happening in my building? I can't," said Gordon, the principal of Paul Robeson High School.</p> <p>Climate change poses a growing threat to American schools. Regions where extreme heat was once rare — from the Northeast to the Pacific Northwest — now periodically find their buildings unbearably hot as spring turns to summer and again when classes resume in August or September.</p> <p>In much of the South, air conditioning has long been a necessity, and schools are typically outfitted with centralized systems, although rising temperatures may require upgrades. But in places such as Philadelphia, air conditioning was a luxury decades ago, when most school buildings were constructed. Perhaps there was a hot day in mid-June or an uncomfortable swelter in early September. They were flukes.</p> <p>No more. Urban areas, in particular, tend to have a dangerous combination of older buildings, less money to upgrade them and concentrated heat. Designed to maximize space in crowded environments, urban schools often lack green space and shade. Asphalt often covers their playgrounds and other open spaces, radiating heat during the summer.</p> <p>A study by the Government Accountability Office found that about 41 percent of public school districts in the United States need to update or replace the heating, cooling and ventilation systems in at least half of their schools. That represents about 36,000 schools nationwide.</p> <p>The GAO pointed to a Michigan school district where 60 percent of schools lack air conditioning and extreme heat has forced the district to change its schedule. It also cited a Maryland district that botched its air conditioning retrofit in some schools, causing moisture and condensation problems that officials estimate could cost \$1 million per building to correct.</p> <p>Heat inhibits learning. In a study published in the journal Nature Human Behavior in 2020, researchers found that students scored worse on standardized exams for every additional day of 80-degree or higher temperatures. The study also found that in the United States, being exposed to higher temperatures mainly impaired the learning of Black and Latino students, who are less likely to have air conditioning at school and at home.</p> |

Experts say the problem is only becoming worse. The [past seven years](#) have, in succession, been the seven hottest years on record. Last summer was tied for the [hottest on record](#) with the Dust Bowl year of 1936.

The suffering is especially acute in cities, which are often significantly warmer than suburbs because of how the built environment amplifies heat — and because racist policies pushed developers to concentrate highways and industry in neighborhoods where people of color lived. Poor and minority neighborhoods that lack trees but have an abundance of pavement, parking lots, large buildings and other heat-absorbing surfaces bear the brunt.

Many cities have seen a rising number of days when the temperature hit 90 degrees or higher in May and June, when schools are operating, according to a Washington Post analysis. Philadelphia averaged four such days in 1970; now the figure is eight. In Baltimore, it went from six to 10; in Denver, from six to 11; and in Cleveland, from one to four. Portland, Ore., now averages three days over 90, up from one in 1970.

A decade ago, school districts canceled schools for heat an average of three or four days per year, according to research by Paul Chinowsky, a professor of civil engineering at the University of Colorado who led a study last year of schools and rising temperatures for the firm Resilient Analytics, which consults for governments and NGOs. That figure has about doubled, to six or seven days annually.

Chinowsky's study also estimated that by 2025, more than 13,700 schools will need to install air conditioning, and an additional 13,500 will need to upgrade existing systems. Nationally, that amounts to about 1 in 4 public schools.

"You're looking at hundreds of millions of dollars for these school districts to upgrade all their schools," Chinowsky said.

Teachers push back

In New York and New Jersey, teachers unions are pushing for state laws to address what they say are intolerable classroom temperatures. A [bill](#) that's been floating around Albany for several years would require schools that hit 82 degrees to take steps to relieve extreme heat, and a classroom that reached 88 degrees couldn't be used. In New Jersey, lawmakers have been trying for a decade to pass a bill requiring districts to maintain comfortable classroom temperatures.

"It is an investment we simply cannot afford to put off any longer," said Steven Baker, a spokesman for the New Jersey Education Association. "Go into any 7-Eleven in New Jersey, and you'll see that it is air-conditioned. If we can do that in the places that we run into for five minutes to buy Slurpees and lottery tickets, we can do it in the schools where our children spend hours every day learning."

In New Jersey, rising temperatures also have made it increasingly difficult for school districts to keep students in classrooms for the 180 days that state law requires, said Elisabeth Ginsburg, the executive director of the Garden State Coalition of Schools, an advocacy group representing about 100 districts in the state.

She said most districts plan for several days of weather-related cancellations each year. But by the time May and June roll around, districts that have already used their bad-weather days are under pressure to keep students in school despite unseasonably high temperatures. Education advocates [who argue for extending](#) the school year run the risk of exposing students to even hotter weather.

City officials also are frustrated. On Tuesday, when Philadelphia schools closed early because of heat, city council member Helen Gym [vented her frustration](#) on Twitter.

"Teaching in these conditions is untenable. Learning in these conditions is unbearable. We can't allow whether or not your school is equipped for AC to dictate the quality of your education," she wrote.

And in D.C., city council member Robert C. White Jr., a candidate for mayor, voiced concern about the heat's impact on schools. "[P]arents and teachers are sending us SOS tweets about hot classrooms &

broken HVAC systems,” he [tweeted](#) Wednesday. “It is unacceptable that our students, teachers & administrators are dealing with this.”

Melting paints

If it’s steamy outside of Erica Weisfelner’s classroom in Farmingdale, N.Y., it’s a safe bet that it’s at least 80 degrees inside her cinder-block walls. The elementary school art teacher’s un-air-conditioned room on Long Island is swampy this time of year. Sheets of paper stick together. Oil pastels turn to mush in her student’s hands. The Wikki Stix projects made of yarn and wax melt together.

“I have 500 students who pass through my room each week, and when it is uncomfortable in here, it’s like trying to stop wet noodles from sticking to the wall,” she said.

On suffocating days, it’s “lights off, free draw,” she said. It’s not her first choice, but it’s the only option when it’s over 90 degrees inside and heat is turning the tempera paints strange colors.

“This is a problem for the whole Northeast,” she said. “We’re now starting to get hot and muggy days even in late April.”

In Oxnard, Calif., voters approved a \$350 million bond measure in 2018 for the main purpose of installing air conditioning in every high school. It would not have been necessary a decade ago in this coastal district, said Oxnard Union High School District Superintendent Tom McCoy.

“We’re only a mile from the ocean,” he said.

Now, McCoy said, the district monitors daily air-temperature data and dismisses students early during heat waves.

Katherine Holden, 44, grew up in Ashland, Ore., and can’t remember ever feeling like she was baking in school. Now she’s the principal of a middle school, and it’s increasingly hot for the half of her campus that lacks air conditioning.

“There’s days when teachers will literally say it’s too hot to do anything productive,” she said. The sun beats into southern-facing classrooms, she said, and “heats them up like little sun rooms.”

In New Jersey, schools without air conditioning in classrooms are offering students water and rotating them through air-conditioned libraries and auditoriums for relief.

Before the pandemic encouraged social distancing, it was common for teachers to combine classes, packing dozens of students into the coolest rooms. Closing schools or dismissing halfway through the day is a last resort, but it’s becoming more common, said Ginsburg, of the Garden State Coalition of Schools.

“There has to be the will to improve these facilities,” she said. “The more that climate change advances, perhaps the will may be there.”

Valerie Wilson, the business administrator for Newark’s public schools, said there’s little public understanding of the high costs and logistical obstacles that districts such as hers would have to overcome to air-condition all their schools. Most of Newark’s 63 school buildings were built in the 19th century, she said, and the majority of classrooms are not air-conditioned. The oldest school, Lafayette Street School, predates Abraham Lincoln’s presidency.

The expectation that every student will have a laptop and every teacher an interactive whiteboard has already strained these schools’ electrical capacity, Wilson said. Simply rewiring century-old buildings to accommodate air-conditioning units would cost millions of dollars, she said.

Under New Jersey’s system, Newark’s board of education cannot ask voters to approve a construction bond to pay for air conditioning. It is wholly dependent on the state for capital funding.

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| | <p>The federal covid relief funding for schools is one source being used for HVAC upgrades in many districts and could total \$40 billion nationally, according to AASA, the School Superintendents Association. About half the districts and charter schools sampled by Burbio, a data firm, planned to spend some of that money on heating, cooling and ventilation.</p> <p>In White Plains, N.Y., Cayne Letizia, a member of the school board, recalls parents coming to him five years ago concerned about the heat and demanding the district add air conditioning. Their concern: It was hot and, with climate change, set to get hotter. Some offered to pay or raise money for window units, he said.</p> <p>It wasn't that simple. Schools needed to have their electrical capacity upgraded to handle the additional load. At first, the district had funding only to cool select portions of its buildings. Now, using a combination of federal, state and local dollars, the district is preparing to install air conditioning throughout its schools, Letizia said.</p> <p>The district needed voter approval to use capital funds for the project, he said, and older voters would often note that they never had air conditioning when they were in school. Why was it needed now? Officials had to explain that it is getting hotter.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/04 Carbon dioxide levels spike past milestone |
| SOURCE | https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/science/carbon-dioxide-levels-in-atmosphere-shoot-past-key-milestone/ |
| GIST | <p>The amount of heat-trapping carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has shot past a key milestone — more than 50% higher than pre-industrial times — and is at levels not seen since millions of years ago when Earth was a hothouse ocean-inundated planet, federal scientists announced Friday.</p> <p>The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said its long-time monitoring station at Mauna Loa, Hawaii, averaged 421 parts per million of carbon dioxide for the month of May, which is when the crucial greenhouse gas hits its yearly high. Before the industrial revolution in the late 19th century carbon dioxide levels were at 280 parts per million, scientists said, so humans have significantly changed the atmosphere. Some activists and scientists want a level of 350 parts per million. Industrial carbon dioxide emissions come from the burning of coal, oil and gas.</p> <p>Levels of the gas continue to rise, when they need to be falling, scientists say. This year's carbon dioxide level is nearly 1.9 ppm more than a year ago, a slightly bigger jump than from May 2020 to May 2021.</p> <p>“The world is trying to reduce emissions, and you just don't see it. In other words, if you're measuring the atmosphere, you're not seeing anything happening right now in terms of change,” said NOAA climate scientist Pieter Tans, who tracks global greenhouse gas emissions for the agency.</p> <p>Outside scientists said the numbers show a severe climate change problem.</p> <p>“Watching these incremental but persistent increases in CO2 year-to-year is much like watching a train barrel down the track towards you in slow motion. It's terrifying,” said University of Wisconsin-Madison climate scientist Andrea Dutton. “If we stay on the track with a plan to jump out of the way at the last minute, we may die of heat stroke out on the tracks before it even gets to us.”</p> <p>University of Illinois climate scientist Donald Wuebbles said without cuts in carbon pollution “we will see ever more damaging levels of climate change, more heat waves, more flooding, more droughts, more large storms and higher sea levels.”</p> <p>The slowdown from the pandemic did cut global carbon emissions a bit in 2020, but they rebounded last year. Both changes were small compared to how much carbon dioxide is pumped into the atmosphere each</p> |

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| | <p>year, especially considering that carbon dioxide stays in the atmosphere hundreds to a thousand years, Tans said.</p> <p>The world puts about 10 billion metric tons of carbon in the air each year, much of it gets drawn down by oceans and plants. That's why May is the peak for global carbon dioxide emissions. Plants in the northern hemisphere start sucking up more carbon dioxide in the summer as they grow.</p> <p>NOAA said carbon dioxide levels are now about the same as 4.1 to 4.5 million years ago in the Pliocene era, when temperatures were 7 degrees (3.9 degrees Celsius) hotter and sea levels were 16 to 82 feet (5 to 25 meters) higher than now. South Florida, for example, was completely under water. These are conditions that human civilization has never known.</p> <p>The reason it was much warmer and seas were higher millions of years ago at the same carbon dioxide level as now is that in the past the natural increase in carbon dioxide levels was far more gradual. With carbon sticking in the air hundreds of years, temperatures heated up over longer periods of time and stayed there. The Antarctic and Greenland ice sheets melted over time, raising sea levels tremendously and making Earth darker and reflecting less heat off the planet, Tans and other scientists said.</p> <p>Scientists at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography calculated levels a bit differently based on time and averaging, and put the May average at 420.8 ppm, slightly lower than NOAA's figure.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/03 Belltown parking spot sells for \$56,000 |
| SOURCE | https://www.seattletimes.com/business/real-estate/its-not-just-houses-belltown-parking-spot-sells-for-56k-and-over-asking-price/ |
| GIST | <p>The latest hot piece of real estate in Seattle is — that's right — a parking spot.</p> <p>A 130-square-foot parking spot under a Belltown condominium building sold Wednesday for a cool \$56,000.</p> <p>Real estate agent Jimmy Chuang said the stall's former owner bought the spot in the garage of the Seattle Heights condo building because he lived nearby and needed a parking spot for an additional vehicle.</p> <p>According to King County property records, he purchased it in 2015 for \$42,750.</p> <p>When he moved, he rented the spot for around \$225 a month until he decided to sell.</p> <p>The spot — just blocks away from Pike Place Market and in a neighborhood where there is little street parking available — is particularly desirable since it is in a secured parking facility with 24/7 access, Chuang said.</p> <p>A listing was posted in mid-May, and one of the photos showed a DeLorean parked next to the vacant spot.</p> <p>The asking price: \$53,500. The sales pitch: "Imagine never having to look for a parking space again!" Chuang said he received about three to four calls a day since the parking spot was posted online. Ultimately two offers were made, Chuang said Friday afternoon.</p> <p>In a county where the median home price just hit \$1 million, some may see the sale as the logical product of a competitive housing market, others as yet another sign of worsening affordability in the city.</p> <p>In recent months, home sellers in the region have seen all-cash offers above asking price. This parking spot was no exception.</p> |

This is the second time Chuang has sold a parking spot in Seattle. Earlier this year, [a parking spot](#) in the garage at The Marq Condominium in Seattle's Capitol Hill neighborhood sold for \$38,000. The asking price was \$50,000. At the time, people called, asking if the listing was real.

Chuang said he did not intend to become a real estate agent for parking spots.

"I welcome the opportunity. It wasn't a niche I purposely tried to target but after these two transactions and a couple of inquiries, I know a lot more," he said.

Seattle Heights, on Second Avenue, represents a rare instance in which parking availability outnumbers tenant parking demand, according to Chuang. Parking spot sales are very rare and are often bundled with condo sales.

"I think this will show buyers that it is important to purchase a property with a parking spot because it will hold its value better," he said.

The condominium building has listed [17 additional parking spots](#) for \$60,000 each. Property taxes for the recently sold spot will total \$253 annually, according to the county.

While the sale price might seem alarming, parking spots in other U.S. cities have sold for even more.

The Seattle Post-Intelligencer reported in 2020 that [a parking spot in San Francisco](#) sold for \$100,000. In that same year, [the average parking spot in New York City](#) was around \$280,000, according to The New York Times.

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Crime, Criminals

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| HEADLINE | 06/06 Deadly weekend: 10 mass shootings |
| SOURCE | https://www.cnn.com/2022/06/06/politics/senate-gun-control-negotiations/index.html |
| GIST | <p>(CNN)In South Carolina and Texas, victims were shot at a high school graduation party. In Kentucky, funeral goers were hit outside a church. Multiple shooters sprayed a crowd with bullets in Philadelphia. In Chattanooga, Tennessee, shots rang out at a nightclub.</p> <p>Just America going about its normal business this weekend under the deadly daily shadow of gun violence, as a staggering 10 mass shootings since Friday deepened trauma from recent massacres at a Buffalo supermarket, a Texas elementary school and a mass shooting at a Tulsa, Oklahoma medical center.</p> <p>A deadly trail of weekend shootings</p> <p>By early Sunday evening, figures detailing a weekend of violence had reached stunning levels, even given the regular daily toll of gun killings and incidents.</p> <p>Since Friday alone, there were 10 mass shootings in the country that killed at least 12 people and injured many more. That's not to mention all the other smaller shootings that occurred, as part of the drum beat of death. At times at the weekend, news of more shootings came in at speeds that were difficult to believe.</p> <p>Of course, most Americans went about their business without coming into contact with violence. But the indiscriminate nature of shootings recently at schools, medical offices, supermarkets, at bars and at parties shows how deeply engrained the threat of gun violence is in everyday life. No one killed in these outrages had any reasons to think that their lives were about to end in relatively mundane locations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Three people were killed and 11 were wounded in Philadelphia on Saturday night. Police said multiple shooters fired into a crowd in the busy South Street night life area. "Once again, we see |

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| | <p>lives senselessly lost and those injured in yet another horrendous, brazen and despicable act of gun violence," Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney said.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the incident in Tennessee, two people died from gunshot wounds and 14 were hurt at a shooting in Chattanooga. A third person died after being hit by a vehicle during the incident, police said. • Across the country, in Mesa, Arizona, two people were killed and two were wounded at a shooting at a bar. • In Phoenix, Arizona, a 14-year-old girl died and at least eight people were injured in a downtown shooting early on Saturday morning. • In yet another mass shooting, in Summerton, South Carolina, eight people were wounded and one was killed. Police told CNN affiliate WIS that two cars pulled into a yard where a high school graduation party was taking place. Victims ranged from 13 to 36 years old. • Five people were wounded at another high school graduation party in Socorro, Texas, when someone started firing into a crowd. • Three people were wounded and one was killed in an incident in Omaha, Nebraska. • In Chesterfield, Virginia: one person was killed and another five were wounded • And in, Macon, Georgia, three people were injured and one was killed when shots were fired in a neighborhood in Bibb County. • In several other incidents that would not be classified as mass shootings in recent days, two people attending a funeral were shot outside a church in Lexington, Kentucky, police said. Both were injured. And on Friday, a former judge in Wisconsin was shot dead in what police called a targeted attack. |
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| HEADLINE | 06/05 Indiana high school graduation shooting |
| SOURCE | https://www.foxnews.com/us/gary-graduation-shooting-multiple-gunmen |
| GIST | <p>Authorities in Indiana responded to a shooting incident at a high school graduation ceremony Sunday afternoon, that left at least three people injured.</p> <p>The shooting took place outside of the RailCats baseball stadium in Gary, Indiana shortly after the graduation ceremony for West Side Leadership Academy. The minor league baseball team's stadium is located less than five miles from the school, and Gary is located about 30 miles southeast of Chicago.</p> <p>"A day that was meant for celebration has now been marked by tragedy through senseless acts of gun violence," Dr. Paige McNulty, manager of the Gary Community School Corporation said in a statement.</p> <p>Around 6 p.m., shots rang out as the graduates and guests were leaving the stadium. The incident involved multiple gunmen, who were arrested at the scene, Fox 32 reported.</p> <p>Two of the victims had gunshot wounds, while a third victim suffered other injuries, according to the report.</p> <p>"During the entire graduation, our students conducted themselves in an excellent manner. Meanwhile, the disruptive actions of a few overshadowed their special moment," McNulty continued. "Thankfully, the offenders have been apprehended, but it doesn't change the hurt and disappointment our students, families, and school community are now feeling."</p> <p>"Our prayers are with those injured, and we continue to extend our congratulations to WSLA graduates," the GCSC manager also said. "They deserve it."</p> <p>Authorities are still investigating the shooting and the identities of the suspects have not yet been released.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/06 SC graduation party shooting: 8 shot |
| SOURCE | https://www.cbsnews.com/news/drive-by-shooting-graduation-party-south-carolina-one-dead-7-wounded/ |

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| GIST | <p><i>Summerton, S.C.</i> — A drive-by shooting at a South Carolina high school graduation party killed a woman and wounded seven other people, authorities said. It was one of several U.S. shootings over the weekend including one in Philadelphia that left three dead and 11 wounded and one in Chattanooga, Tennessee in which three people were killed and 14 injured.</p> <p>About 150 people were at a party near the town of Summerton when the shooting started at around 11 p.m. Saturday, Clarendon County Sheriff Tim Baxley told news outlets.</p> <p>He said the shooting may have been gang-related, but he didn't know if any of the victims had been specifically targeted.</p> <p>There was no earlyword on possible suspects.</p> <p>Audrionna Kind, 32, of Summerton, died Sunday, Coroner Jacqueline Blackwell said.</p> <p>The majority of the wounded were teenagers, ages 13, 14, 17 and two age 15. The other two victims were 12 and 36.</p> <p>Witnesses told CBS Columbia, South Carolina affiliate WLTX-TV two vehicles approached the crowd and gunfire followed. The sheriff's department counted between 60 and 70 shell casings at the scene.</p> <p>The station said coroner Jacqueline Blackwell confirmed that 32-year-old Audrionna Kind of Summerton was the person whose life was taken. She'd been air-lifted to a hospital.</p> <p>School officials told WLTX earlier in the day that the victim, who hadn't been publicly identified yet, was a mother of students in Clarendon County School District Four.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/05 School principal 'stonewalled' police? |
| SOURCE | https://mynorthwest.com/3504742/rantz-seattle-principal-stonewalled-police-after-man-terrorized-school/ |
| GIST | <p>A man suspected of being high on meth allegedly jumped over the fence at a Seattle elementary school, entered a portable classroom, and attempted to steal students' backpacks. It prompted a school lockdown. But when police arrived, the school principal would not cooperate. It likely played a role in the suspect then attempting to hijack a delivery van moments later.</p> <p>The suspect is 20-year-old Liban Harasam and, according to police, is a High Utilizer — the designation for prolific offenders that the Seattle City Attorney will now prioritize after arrest.</p> <p>Police say Harasam arrived at Sand Point Elementary school just before 2:30pm last Thursday. Police documents allege he hopped the fence to the campus where, according to a parent, he was allegedly "harassing students and staff." The parent said he "proceeded to rifle through [student] backpacks and touch many of them on their heads and backs" while wielding a tennis racket.</p> <p>Police were called after the school went into lockdown. But Principal Richard Baileykaze, according to the incident report, would not cooperate with police, effectively preventing an arrest.</p> <p>Uncooperative principal</p> <p>When one officer arrived, he saw parents gathered outside of the school. The officer was not initially told the school was on lockdown.</p> <p>"I met Principal R. [Baileykaze], in the north parking lot. He was observing the suspect with two other teachers. He provided very little information about the incident. I was only advised that the suspect jumped the fence," the officer wrote in his incident report.</p> |

The officer observed Harasam “walking around in circles” while repeatedly dropping personal items, according to the report. He may have been high or experiencing a mental health crisis.

“Principal R. [Baileykaze] and the other two teachers would not speak to me. I had not been advised of any crime, so I contacted the suspect thinking I was performing a welfare check, due to his mental state. He appeared to be under the influence of narcotics or possibly having a mental episode,” the officer wrote.

Harasam would not speak to the officer and walked off.

“Once HARASAM, LIBAN left the school grounds, Principal R. [Baileykaze] now stated the suspect took a child’s backpack,” the report alleges.

Principal ‘destroyed probable cause’

The officer now had probable cause for misdemeanor theft — he just needed the info of the student so he would have a victim.

“Principal R. [Baileykaze] now claimed HARASAM, LIBAN had the backpack. Principal R. [Baileykaze] turned away from me and walked off. He refused to advise me if anything had been taken from the backpack. He continued to walk away. I advised radio of the principal’s uncooperative behavior, which destroyed probable cause that a crime occurred. I was unable to validate his earlier claims of a crime,” the report says.

Again, the principal would not help, allowing the suspect to walk, according to police.

“I no longer had probable cause that crime occurred, since there was no victim identified for the theft, and Principal R. [Baileykaze] walked off refusing to cooperate,” the officer writes in the report.

Suspect accused of assault and vehicle prowling

Without the ability to arrest, Harasam ran away. Not long after, he was accused of assault and attempting to steal a DHL delivery van.

According to an incident report by a second officer, the DHL driver “stated that he had left his van running while he made a quick drop off.” That’s when he says he saw Harasam enter the van.

“[The driver] began yelling at the male to get out, believing the suspect was about to steal the vehicle. [The driver] got to the door of the vehicle and was stuck in the face with what he believed was a blue binder. He attempted to move out of the way of the strike, but was hit in the mouth causing a split bleeding lip. The [driver] pulled the male out of the vehicle, but the suspect grabbed at the mounted cell phone that the victim had by the steering wheel. The victim believed that the suspect was attempting to steal his phone before exiting the vehicle,” the report states.

Two witnesses corroborate the driver’s story, with one saying it was the same suspect previously on school grounds.

Fighting the cops

Harasam allegedly fled the scene to board a King County Metro bus. When officers boarded the bus, the suspect allegedly tried to fight them.

As one officer was “trying to get LIBAN into handcuffs, LIBAN purposely used his body and slammed [an officer’s] wrist into the window of the bus causing substantial pain and possible injury,” a third incident report states.

That officer, according to a source, fractured her arm or wrist as a result.

After finally placing Harasam into handcuffs and removing him from the bus, “LIBAN was struggling the entire time and was shouting ‘you don’t have probably [sic] cause.’”

The incident report says it took four officers to hold Harasam down. Seattle Fire responded and medics “arrived to subdue” him due to his “erratic” behavior.

After the arrest, police say they found stolen items on Harasam, some of which were returned to their owner.

This could have been avoided

The alleged van theft and assault against officers could have been prevented had principal Baileykaze cooperated with police. Without a victim, it’s difficult to establish probable cause for an arrest unless the officer witnessed the crime occur. This allowed Harasam time to leave the scene and allegedly commit the other crimes.

Neither Baileykaze nor SPS spokespeople responded to multiple requests for comment made over the weekend.

The principal’s conduct, as outlined in the incident, is deeply troubling. A number of officers, speaking on the condition of anonymity, say it is common for Seattle Public School staff to stonewall officers after an initial 911 call is made. It’s unclear if this is a result of an SPS policy forcing staff to not cooperate with police or this is due to anti-police sentiment by SPS staff.

Suspect is charged

Police identify Harasam as a High Utilizer in the city of Seattle with multiple police contacts and arrests. The new Seattle City Attorney, Ann Davison, has identified dozens of High Utilizers responsible for a large number of local crimes. These cases are prioritized in her office to keep those suspects off the streets.

According to court documents, Harasam faces charges of first degree criminal trespass, two counts of assault, vehicle prowling and resisting arrest.

His bail was set at \$10,000 and court records show he refused to attend his arraignment. Harasam has a competency evaluation hearing on Monday, June 6

Harasam was previously cited for assault in May, 2020 but under previous City Attorney Pete Holmes, the city did not file charges.

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| HEADLINE | 06/05 Chattanooga bar shooting: 14 shot, 3 dead |
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| SOURCE | https://newschannel9.com/news/local/heavy-police-presence-in-downtown-chattanooga-sunday-morning-mass-shooting-crime-marys-bar-grill-mccallie-lyerly-gun-violence |
| GIST | <p>2:30 PM UPDATE:</p> <p>CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. — Chattanooga Police Department is beginning to re-open portions of McCallie Avenue.</p> <p>Chattanooga Mayor Tim Kelly and Chief Murphy held a press conference following the shooting this morning. Mayor Kelly is asking for Congress to take action to address the issue of gun violence in the country.</p> <p>"Our city will put a stop to this," says Mayor Kelly.</p> <p>Read his full statement below:</p> <p><i>"There's a lot we don't know about what happened this morning, but what we do know is that there are families whose lives have been shattered because once again, we had people deciding to resolve their issues with firearms."</i></p> |

Ginny and I are grieving and praying for the families of those who lost their lives and for those who were injured as a result of this act of violence.

And while we are still gathering the facts, in this case, we know that many of the recent acts of violence in our community have revolved around a very small group of people - often the same people, over and over again.

Here is my message to those individuals: We will relentlessly pursue you with all of the resources we have at our disposal. From forensics to federal support, we won't stop until you're in police custody. To anyone thinking about turning to violence, don't—there will be tremendous consequences for you. I should also note that my administration is fully committed to getting the Chattanooga Police Department all the resources they need to stop this cycle of violence.

Our city will not tolerate people who feel they are beyond the law. And while my administration is working hard to address the economic and social factors that often drive people to turn to violence in the first place, we are also committed to ensuring that those who commit acts of violence will be held accountable. I'm grateful for the Chattanooga Police Department and for all of the first responders across multiple agencies who acted quickly and courageously to contain the situation.

I am also grateful to members of our City Council for being here today. We are all aligned, and we WILL act, together. Our city will treat this like the crisis it is. Over the next few weeks, my administration will be releasing even more ways our community will address gun violence.

And finally, I am a gun owner. I've been an avid hunter and marksman all my life—and so I want to say this clearly, I fully support responsible gun ownership, but Congress needs to do their jobs and pass common sense regulations that will help stop this nonsense. That doesn't mean taking guns away from responsible gun owners, but it does mean mandatory background checks and prohibiting high-capacity magazines that allow shooters to hurt dozens of people without having to so much as reload. In mass shootings between 2009 and 2020, high-capacity magazines led to 5x as many people shot per mass shooting. This stuff is just common sense. And it's a simple way we can keep people safe.

I'm tired of standing in front of you talking about guns and bodies. Chattanooga will not tolerate this in our community. Our city can put a stop to it, but each of us has to make the choice to do something. If you know anything, no matter how small or insignificant it might seem, call 423-643-5100—you can remain anonymous, we just want the information.

Stop the shooting, stop the violence. This city and our communities are better than this, and we demand it."

Republican candidate for District Attorney Coty Wamp released the following statement regarding the shootings as well as the continued violent crimes and gang shootings occurring in Chattanooga.

"My office will undoubtedly be handling the cases of those that are responsible for the shootings in the last 10 days. I've said it many times before, and I'll say it again — put a gun in your hand with the intent to harm this community, and my office will seek the harshest punishment that the law allows. You will not receive a break. You will not receive probation. You will go to prison. You're not just wreaking havoc. You're not just hurting our city. You're taking children from parents. Your taking sisters from their brothers. You're taking grandsons from their grandmother. You're causing the worst amount of pain imaginable.

We also won't hide from the word "gang". This violence is gang related. Period. We cannot fix the problem until we are honest about the problem.

I'll work with the Mayor and the Police Chief in any way I can. I'll fight for officers and deputies when they ask for help. But the main thing I am called to do is enforce the law — and I will. That's my solution. No more leniency. CPD officers, hang in there and thanks for the job you do. Your sleepless nights are recognized, and they mean something."

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| | <p>11AM UPDATE:</p> <p>Chattanooga Police Chief Celeste Murphy says a chaotic scene left 14 shot and 3 people hit by vehicles outside a Chattanooga bar early Sunday morning.</p> <p>A total of 3 people lost their lives: Two died from gunshot wounds, and a third died after a vehicle trying to get away from the scene ran over them.</p> <p>Speaking at a news conference just after 11 a.m., Chief Murphy says investigators believe more than one person opened fire.</p> <p>But she says there is no immediate danger to the public.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/05 Tacoma PD arrested 5 students since May |
| SOURCE | https://komonews.com/news/local/police-in-tacoma-have-arrested-five-students-for-guns-or-threats-since-may |
| GIST | <p>Tacoma Police are urging students to report any suspicious behavior at school after arresting five teenagers since May.</p> <p>Among them is a 13-year-old Mason Middle School student who allegedly threatened to recreate the Uvalde, Texas shooting, but never had a gun, according to a social media post from Tacoma Police.</p> <p>“The student claimed they were going to shoot other students,” said Wendy Haddow with Tacoma Police.</p> <p>The other arrests were for students bringing guns onto their school campuses, at two middle schools and a high school.</p> <p>“Even if it’s just a gun at school and no threats were made, or if someone took a gun to school to make them feel safer to protect themselves from bullying- not acceptable to have guns at school,” Haddow said, but would not say the specific reasons why students brought guns to school in these most recent cases.</p> <p>Students off-camera at Lincoln High School told KOMO they are surprised to hear the details of one of those incidents that happened at their school.</p> <p>“The students had a school walkout and went to Lincoln Park and there was an altercation and a student pistol-whipped another student. That suspect actually turned himself in and was arrested,” Haddow stated.</p> <p>This comes at a time when safety is top of mind for everyone. In the weeks since the mass shooting in Uvalde, students in Washington have been outspoken against gun violence.</p> <p>They’re among the reasons why police are urging parents to talk to their kids about reporting any suspicious behavior or threats to their teachers.</p> <p>Police say in most of these recent cases, students waited until they got home to tell their parents, who then called the police.</p> <p>“We just want to make sure that all the students at our Tacoma schools are safe and know that when they report something that Tacoma Police will look into it,” she explained.</p> <p>The 13-year-old student who made the threat was arrested for felony harassment and booked into Remann Hall, police said. Police would not release the names or charges for these cases because they are minors.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/05 Mass shooting: no consensus definition |
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| SOURCE | https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2022/06/05/mass-shooting-defined-meaning/7481731001/ |
| GIST | <p>Mourning and outrage has shaken the nation as mass shootings continue to mark some of the latest chapters of a long history of gun violence across the United States.</p> <p>On Wednesday, a gunman killed four people in a shooting at a medical center in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The attack comes after high-profile shooting massacres in Buffalo, New York, where 10 Black people were killed, and Uvalde, Texas, where 19 children and two teachers were killed in May.</p> <p>As Americans grapple with these horrific shootings and many demand change, it's important to understand the language and data surrounding mass shootings and their impact worldwide.</p> <p>"These [data] counts are just a really small fraction of lives that are altered forever after these tragedies... [Mass shootings] shatter families and whole communities," Sarah Burd-Sharps, senior director of research at advocacy nonprofit Everytown For Gun Safety, told USA TODAY.</p> <p>What is considered a mass shooting? How many mass shootings occur each year? Here's what you need to know.</p> <p>'We're in a paralysis': There have already been a dozen mass killings this year. Here's what the numbers show.</p> <p>Bloodshed since Sandy Hook: Uvalde school shooting among deadliest school attacks in past 10 years</p> <p>What is considered a mass shooting? There's no single consensus on the definition today.</p> <p>The Gun Violence Archive, a nonprofit research group, defines a mass shooting as an incident in which four or more people are shot or killed, not including the shooter.</p> <p>In contrast, Everytown currently defines it as a shooting in which four or more people are shot and killed, again excluding the shooter – but Burd-Sharps noted that they are moving towards expanding the definition to also include four or more injuries in the future.</p> <p>The Federal Bureau of Investigation doesn't have a mass shooting definition. Instead, the FBI defines "mass murder" as an incident where four or more people are killed, which can include gun violence.</p> <p>USA TODAY defines a mass shooting as an incident where at least four people are hit with gunfire, even if there are no fatalities. Mass killing refers is an incident in which at least four people are killed.</p> <p>How USA TODAY covers mass shootings: Why you won't see a picture of Buffalo suspect on our front page</p> <p>The Gun Violence Archive's mass shooting definition includes those who are injured because injuries also cost families "tremendously," said executive director Mark Bryant.</p> <p>Bryant also said it's important to remember that "the term 'mass' is a term of quantity, it's a measurement of quantity. That's all it is, there's no political caveats attached to it."</p> <p>Burd-Sharps recognizes that differing definitions can be confusing to the general public, but stresses that, "no matter how you define it, whether it's an average of 20 a year with four plus killed or an average of practically one a day with four plus shots, either one is far too high."</p> <p>Are mass shootings the deadliest type of gun violence? Bryant notes that mass shootings make up for just a fraction of the gun violence crisis.</p> |

In 2021, more than 45,000 people died from gun violence in the United States. [703 were killed](#) in mass shootings, according to Gun Violence Archive data.

"Mass shootings cover about 75% of my conversations, my emails and my queries, [but they] count for 5% to 6% of my work," Bryant said. "5% or 6% of all the people that have been shot in the last nine years [were shot in mass shootings]."

Every year, 1% gun violence deaths of come from mass shootings in which four or more people were killed, according to Everytown and Burd-Sharps.

How many mass shootings has the US had in 2022?

When using the Gun Violence Archive's definition of mass shootings to include shootings where four or more were injured, a total of 233 mass shootings have been reported so far this year. In 2022, there have been 12 mass shootings in the U.S. with a death count of four or more, based on current numbers [from the Gun Violence Archive](#).

According to Everytown, there are an average of 19 mass shootings in which four or more are shot and killed each year in the U.S.

What state has the most mass shootings?

California and Texas have reported the highest amount of mass shootings in which four or more were killed, according to Everytown counts. As Burd-Sharps notes, it's important to recognize that these states likely report the highest numbers because of their larger populations.

[California](#) and [Texas](#) have each reported 30 mass shootings in which four or more were killed since 2009. Florida followed with a count of 17.

Does the US have the most mass shootings in the world? It's hard to say definitively

The United States reports significantly high rates of mass shootings in comparison to other countries around the world – but extensive debate has been raised about [differences in per capita rates](#) and, again, conflicting definitions of mass shootings.

Still, the number of mass shootings in the United States in comparison to the rest of the world is jarring. For example, a [study](#) published in 2022 in the International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice looked at mass shootings in which four or more were killed in the U.S. and 35 other high-income countries. Only five countries had more than two mass shootings from 1998 to 2019. The United States had 101.

In addition, the study found that mass shootings in the U.S. accounted for 73% of all the mass shooting incidents in these countries during this period.

What charges do mass shooters face?

Charges depend on each specific case, but mass shooters often face murder, terrorism and/or hate crime charges.

For example, Payton Gendron, the white man accused of killing 10 Black people [in a racist massacre at a Buffalo supermarket](#) in May, was indicted Wednesday on charges of domestic terrorism motivated by hate and 10 counts of first-degree murder.

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| HEADLINE | 06/04 'Dead suspect loophole' Uvalde shooting? |
| SOURCE | https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/what-is-the-dead-suspect-loophole-and-how-will-it-affect-what-we-know-about-uvalde/ |

DALLAS — In the days since an 18-year-old gunman barricaded himself inside an elementary school classroom in Uvalde and fatally shot 19 students and two teachers, the police’s narrative of the events leading up to and during the massacre has shifted by the day.

As more shocking details are revealed about police action — and inaction — during the slaying, the Uvalde community has been desperate for answers.

Journalists and lawmakers have called for the release of 911 calls, body-camera footage and other evidence to determine what happened May 24, but Texas open-records laws may prevent the public from ever seeing important evidence.

Here’s how what is referred to as the “dead suspect loophole” might affect what we know about Uvalde:

What is the dead suspect loophole?

Under the Texas Public Information Act, governmental bodies are required to make records “about the affairs of government and the official acts of public officials and employees” available to the public.

There are several exceptions to what is considered public information, however, including what has been referred to as the dead suspect loophole.

Under state law, law-enforcement records that deal with an investigation that doesn’t result in a conviction don’t have to be made public. That includes when a person dies during an interaction with law enforcement.

How might the loophole apply to Uvalde?

Salvador Ramos spent more than an hour inside Robb Elementary School before he was killed by law enforcement.

Initially, officials said Ramos was confronted by a school security officer, which ended up being untrue. It was then revealed that officers were waiting inside the school while children and teachers called 911 and pleaded for help.

Reports that Ramos walked into the building through a propped open door later turned out to be unfounded. On Friday, authorities said school district police Chief Pete Arredondo — who led the response that day — didn’t have his radio with him.

While 911 tapes, communications between law-enforcement agencies and other evidence would likely be crucial in piecing together an accurate picture of what happened that day, it’s possible those records will not be made public because Ramos was killed by police.

The decision on whether or not to publicize the records around the massacre will be up to law enforcement.

Lawmakers call for action

State officials have tried to address the dead suspect loophole in past legislative sessions.

State Rep. Dade Phelan, a Republican representing District 21 in southeast Texas, is among lawmakers in recent days who have called for the Texas Legislature to address the loophole.

In a series of tweets, Phelan said it would be “absolutely unconscionable” to allow the loophole to affect the knowledge that victims’ families have of what happened during the shooting.

“Families of those who die in custody never get closure or access to details of their loved one’s death because of this loophole. This is an area in dire need of reform,” he wrote.

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| | Phelan, who is speaker of the Texas House, announced Friday that the House would be investigating the events at the elementary school. He said a committee will examine evidence from law enforcement and release findings “as soon as possible to help inform the work of the House.” |
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| HEADLINE | 06/04 WV deputy fatally shot; 1 suspect killed |
| SOURCE | https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/nation/west-virginia-deputy-sheriff-fatally-shot-1-suspect-killed/ |
| GIST | <p>BIRCH RIVER, W.Va. (AP) — A West Virginia sheriff’s deputy was killed, another was injured and a surviving suspect has been charged with murder after a shootout at a residence.</p> <p>The Nicholas County deputy sheriff, Tom Baker, was killed Friday night while responding to a domestic disturbance in the Birch River area around 5 p.m., Sheriff William Nunley said Saturday. Baker was struck in the back by a bullet.</p> <p>The area is about an hour east of the state capitol, Charleston.</p> <p>Police arrived at a camper and made contact with two men who came and talked with the deputies, “but at some point the suspects became agitated” and ran back inside, Nunley said in a media release.</p> <p>The deputies pursued them and discharged a taser. The two men began firing at police and officers backed out of the camper, Nunley said.</p> <p>Baker was shot and another deputy, Corporal J. Ellison, was hit in the leg. Ellison was treated and released from a hospital.</p> <p>One of the two suspects, 36-year-old Ritchie Holcomb, was fatally shot. The other man, 28-year-old Brent Tyler Kelly, was taken into custody after a short standoff, Nunley said.</p> <p>Kelly has been charged with first-degree murder, according to WCHS-TV.</p> <p>West Virginia state police are investigating the incident.</p> <p>Gov. Jim Justice announced the death of the deputy Friday night. Justice said in a social media post that “first responders are heroes. They run to the fire to keep us safe, and we should never forget their service.”</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/05 Mongols MC claims leader an informant |
| SOURCE | https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/05/us/mongols-new-trial.html |
| GIST | <p>For more than two decades, federal law enforcement authorities pursued the Mongols, a notorious motorcycle club whose members had a long history of murder, assault, drug dealing and robbery.</p> <p>In 2018, the government scored a victory of sorts. Prosecutors convinced a jury in California that these crimes were not just the result of individual bikers behaving badly, but the work of an organized criminal enterprise that had participated in a campaign of mayhem. The club was ordered to pay a \$500,000 fine in what prosecutors hoped would be a down payment on putting it out of business.</p> <p>But the group that was once the most powerful biker organization in the West other than its archrivals, the Hells Angels, is returning to court next week, hoping to set aside the racketeering and conspiracy convictions based on what it says is new evidence about its previous leader, David Santillan. The Mongols are now claiming that throughout their attempt to defend the club in the long-running criminal case, their own leader was secretly talking to the government.</p> <p>A petition for a new trial and reversal of the half-million-dollar fine, which is scheduled for an initial hearing on Monday in the U.S. District Court in Santa Ana, Calif., claims that Mr. Santillan, 52, covertly cooperated for years with a special agent from the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and</p> |

Explosives. In exchange, the club said in its motion, the agent appears to have spared Mr. Santillan from serious legal consequences for several offenses since 2011.

The unusual legal imbroglio provides a rare glimpse into the hidden and volatile politics of the outlaw motorcycle club and the degree to which law enforcement and its targets may engage in limited cooperation when it is seen as mutually beneficial.

The A.T.F. and other law enforcement agencies have long gone after biker organizations by co-opting members as informants and infiltrating the groups with their own undercover agents.

The Mongols are relying on an explosive video shared by Mr. Santillan's wife, Annie Santillan, who, during a stretch when she was angry with her husband over his infidelity, had her daughter record a conversation in which he appeared to refer to protection he had received from the A.T.F. agent.

She also said in a text message to other Mongols, now filed with the court, that her husband had acted for a time as a confidential government informant. "In other words," she wrote, "he is a rat."

Both Mr. Santillan, a Mongols member for almost 25 years who was voted out of the club in July, and the agent, John Ciccone, who retired in December after 32 years at the A.T.F., deny that Mr. Santillan was acting as an informant during the trial, though Mr. Ciccone's sworn declaration does not address whether Mr. Santillan had acted as a confidential informant in the past. Both men also rejected the claim that Mr. Santillan had revealed privileged defense information to the government while his motorcycle club was on trial.

The current national leaders of the Mongols said they were convinced that the club's former president, who controlled the Mongols' defense team, had acted improperly. "It became clear that Dave had betrayed the club, his oath and everything we hold sacred," the club said in a statement.

Mr. Santillan has acknowledged that he talked often with Mr. Ciccone for a period of years, usually in the presence of other Mongols members. He said they discussed matters such as public safety when the Mongols or other clubs were planning parties or motorcycle rallies to ensure that members stayed in line and that rival groups kept their distance.

"Never in my life have I ever implicated anybody in the club for some kind of nefarious activity. If you're a rat, you're the scum of the earth," he said in an interview.

In the video, Ms. Santillan was talking to her husband on speakerphone when he told her that Mr. Ciccone was retiring. "He can't protect me, he told me, so we have to have an exit strategy, he told me," an apparently agitated Mr. Santillan said to her.

Ms. Santillan said that she now felt "horrible" about disclosing the communications and that her husband was not, in fact, an informant.

"The only thing he is guilty of is talking to John a lot and having some kind of rapport with him," she said in an interview.

Mr. Santillan said he talked with the A.T.F. agent over the years because it helped avert trouble. "John looked out not just for me but the club," Mr. Santillan said. "That's what I meant by 'protect' in the video."

The Mongols have been fixtures on the biker scene since 1969, when the club was founded in Montebello, Calif. The group has about 1,200 members in the United States, most of them Hispanic, and numerous chapters around the world.

During the almost 13 years he led the Mongols, Mr. Santillan appeared to steer the organization away from its past recruitment of Mexican criminal gang members and a culture of "total underworld activity that the

feds feasted on, in terms of prosecutions,” said William Dulaney, an expert on motorcycle groups who was formerly an associate professor of national security at the U.S. Air Force’s Air Command and Staff College.

Mr. Dulaney said that Mr. Santillan “instituted new policies, like no more club-driven drug business, and made it mandatory that members had to have a motorcycle and things like a valid driver’s license and registration and a job.”

As for Mr. Ciccone, he had mastered the craft of executing complex investigations “using everything from undercovers to informants to wiretaps to subpoenas and surveillance,” said Frank D’Alesio, a retired A.T.F. agent who infiltrated three biker clubs.

“And he was tireless,” Mr. D’Alesio said. “He was the guy outside all the time providing cover support in case something went wrong with the undercovers.”

In the case that led to the racketeering conviction against the Mongols, Mr. Ciccone had acted as the case agent. The U.S. Attorney’s Office had earlier tried and failed to force the Mongols to forfeit their rights to the club’s trademarked logo, a drawing of a brawny Genghis Khan-like figure riding a chopper while brandishing a sword, a landmark case that prosecutors felt would help weaken the club by undermining its visual identity. A jury sided with the prosecution in 2019 and ordered the group to give up the emblem, but Judge David O. Carter rejected the verdict as an infringement on the club’s constitutional rights.

That quest to seize the Mongols’ patch was part of a criminal case brought by the U.S. Attorney’s Office in 2013 under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act. The indictment did not target any individuals but alleged that the club itself had engaged in an organized conspiracy of crimes such as murder, attempted murder and drug dealing. That is the conviction and fine the Mongols are now trying to have set aside.

“In my opinion, the only reason the government brought this RICO case was to take another run at the patch, having failed each time in the past,” said George L. Steele, a lawyer for the Mongols who is handling a separate appeal in the case. Federal prosecutors have been focusing on the Mongols’ logo since 2008.

The government, in its own appeal, is making another run at the Mongols’ logo, renewing an earlier request for a narrower forfeiture order that would take away the club’s right to trademark exclusivity over the emblem. Such an order would allow anyone to use the image.

The lawyer in charge of the retrial motion, Joseph A. Yanny, said the Mongols hoped to prove that an improper relationship between Mr. Santillan and Mr. Ciccone during the 2018 trial allowed the government to hear things it should not have about the Mongols’ defense strategy — and even adversely influenced the Mongols’ presentation of their case.

On one occasion during the trial, Judge Carter expressed his displeasure to lawyers for both sides after being told by a U.S. Marshal that Mr. Santillan and Mr. Ciccone had been seen chatting at a Starbucks near the courthouse.

In their petition, the Mongols argue that Mr. Santillan could have been pressured to leak strategy and other information to the government as a result of lenient treatment the defense claimed he received during his brushes with the law.

In one of them, according to their court papers, Mr. Santillan crashed his Mercedes in 2017 while driving impaired, damaging numerous cars parked on the street. In another instance, in 2014, Mr. Santillan and his wife got into a brawl with other people at a racetrack, the Mongols’ filing says.

“There is no way he’s gotten away with these incidents without more significant legal repercussions unless someone in law enforcement is in the background greasing the slides for him,” Mr. Yanny said.

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| | <p>Mr. Santillan said it was “ridiculous” to think that Mr. Ciccone smoothed things over for him. Mr. Santillan provided records from the cases to show he had been convicted of offenses including driving under the influence, leaving the scene of an accident and disturbing the peace, and that he had been arrested, fined and put on probation.</p> <p>Jonathan Turley, a constitutional law expert at George Washington University, said that if a federal agent was seeking confidential information about a criminal defense, that would be “an extraordinary transgression.”</p> <p>“There could be a particular concern that the defense lawyer was unwittingly receiving directions from someone aligned with the government,” he said.</p> <p>Both Mr. Ciccone and the U.S. Attorney’s Office declined to comment on the motion beyond the government response filed in court, which said the petition for a new trial was “replete with false and unsupported allegations and speculation.”</p> <p>The judge will most likely consider a series of procedural matters on Monday, lawyers said, with additional hearings expected before any final ruling.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/05 Philadelphia shooting: 3 dead, 11 injured |
| SOURCE | https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2022/06/05/philadelphia-shooting-south-street-police/7521384001/ |
| GIST | <p>PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Three people have died and at least 11 other people were wounded in a shooting late Saturday night in Philadelphia, authorities said.</p> <p>The Philadelphia Police Department responded to reports of a person with a gun in a large crowd.</p> <p>Police Inspector D. F. Pace said during a news conference that shots were fired into the downtown crowd and an officer shot at a suspect. It is unclear if the suspect was hit.</p> <p>“You can imagine there were hundreds of individuals just enjoying South Street, as they do every single weekend, when this shooting broke out,” Pace said.</p> <p>The conditions of those who were wounded by gunfire remains unknown.</p> <p>Authorities say no arrests have been made but that two weapons were recovered.</p> <p>The department said on Twitter to avoid the area and that several people were injured.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/04 Phoenix strip mall shooting: 9 shot, 1 dead |
| SOURCE | https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2022/06/04/1-dead-8-injured-after-shooting-in-phoenix-strip-mall/7514400001/ |
| GIST | <p>PHOENIX — Nine people were shot, one of whom was fatally wounded, after an altercation between multiple parties in Phoenix escalated early Saturday morning, according to police.</p> <p>The shooting took place at a strip mall at about 1 a.m. in north Phoenix, both inside the building and in a nearby parking lot and roadway area.</p> <p>The incident left one 14-year-old girl dead, police said.</p> <p>Phoenix police Sgt. Andy Williams told reporters nine people he characterized as young adults were taken to hospitals after the late-night shooting sent people running.</p> |

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| | <p>One female died after being transported to a local hospital. Another female, five males and a teenage boy face injuries. Police said at least two of the injured victims were in critical condition.</p> <p>Information about injuries to the ninth victim was not immediately available.</p> <p>Williams said it appeared that a handgun was used after an argument erupted among those gathered for what he termed “some sort of party.”</p> <p>“Many rounds were shot into this crowd of people as everyone fled the area,” he said.</p> <p>In an interview posted by ABC 15, Williams said no suspects were immediately identified and no arrests were made while authorities pieced together witness accounts.</p> <p>Victims' ages ranged from about 17 to 24, according to police.</p> <p>Officials announced before 9 a.m. on Saturday that a road near the strip mall would be closed while detectives process the area and look for witnesses and evidence.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/04 Man killed judge, targeted Mich. gov. |
| SOURCE | https://www.wsj.com/articles/wisconsin-gunman-who-killed-man-also-targeted-michigan-governor-11654380639?mod=hp_listb_pos1 |
| GIST | <p>A gunman who shot and killed a retired Wisconsin judge had a list of names of government officials that included Gov. Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan, her spokesman said Saturday.</p> <p>The suspected gunman, identified as Douglas K. Uhde, entered a residence in New Lisbon, Wis., on Friday at about 6:30 a.m., according to the Wisconsin Department of Justice.</p> <p>Police, responding to a call of two shots fired, found the 68-year-old former judge dead inside the house after forcing entry at roughly 10:15 a.m. The Wisconsin DOJ identified him as John Roemer, a former Juneau County circuit court judge.</p> <p>The suspected 56-year-old shooter was found in the basement with an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound, the Wisconsin DOJ said. He was transported to a medical facility in critical condition, authorities said. A firearm was recovered at the scene.</p> <p>His list included Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell and Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers, according to the Associated Press. Their offices didn't immediately respond to requests for comment.</p> <p>At a press conference Friday afternoon, Wisconsin Attorney General Josh Kaul said the suspect might have had other targets in mind as well.</p> <p>“It appears to be related to the judicial system,” Mr. Kaul said. “We’ve been in contact with the individuals who were identified as potentially being targets and informed them of the information that we have that’s relevant to their security.”</p> <p>Ms. Whitmer’s deputy chief of staff, Zack Pohl, said her office learned Friday that she was among them.</p> <p>“Our office was notified by law-enforcement officials that Governor Whitmer’s name appeared on the Wisconsin gunman’s list,” he said.</p> <p>Mr. Pohl said the information was deeply troubling but declined to speak further about the investigation.</p> <p>“Gov. Whitmer has demonstrated repeatedly that she is tough,” he said.</p> |

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| | <p>A federal jury in December found two men not guilty and deadlocked on two others in a trial accusing the four of a plot to kidnap Ms. Whitmer.</p> <p>Prosecutors alleged that the four men were associated with a militia group called the Wolverine Watchmen and were angry with the Democratic governor's policies to fight the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/04 Tacoma PD 'see something, say something' |
| SOURCE | https://www.king5.com/article/news/crime/tacoma-police-caution-parents-families-gun-violence-threats/281-4421a15f-be49-44ff-92ed-8102f5c6e6ce |
| GIST | <p>TACOMA, Wash — In the wake of several arrests of students for bringing guns to school, Tacoma Police Department is reminding families to "see something, say something." Meanwhile, gun safety advocates are encouraging parents to have conversations with their children about safety and about empowering positive change.</p> <p>"We're really bringing the attention to this now because last month, we had quite a few incidents at schools where students had weapons on school grounds," said TPD Public Information Officer Wendy Haddow. "One of the instances was not a real gun but looked real and we're just reminding people to stay vigilant and reminding parents to talk with their kids so if kids see this during school time, it's reported when they see it."</p> <p>That means calling 9-1-1 to report a threat, or sighting of a gun. Tacoma Public Schools posted guidance, along with information about recent security efforts, here.</p> <p>"We're finding a lot of times, when kids are seeing guns at school, they're not notifying other staff, they're actually waiting until they get home and notifying their parents," Haddow said. "That's why we're asking parents to talk to kids about it and what their plan is going to be if they see something unsafe at school or witness threats or an assault, what are they going to do? A lot of times if they talk it out with their parents first, they don't have to grapple with those issues, while it's happening in front of them."</p> <p>The Washington-based Alliance for Gun Responsibility said it "works to end the gun violence crisis in our community and to promote a culture of gun ownership that balances rights with responsibilities."</p> <p>Education and Engagement Director Tremayne Edwards said it's important for parents to speak with their children both about gun safety- and about creating a safer culture overall.</p> <p>"There's also the part of parents doing their part- safe storage, right, if you are a gun owner, having them locked away and unloaded so your kids also don't have access to those, and teaching the conversation of safe storage- the importance of that and how it keeps others alive and safe," Edwards said. "Also, how they can also be good stewards in the community of keeping each other safe."</p> <p>Edwards said that after incidents like school shootings, parents should have the conversation about what happened, but they should also promote a focus on solutions.</p> <p>"That's the end-all be-all of that conversation," Edwards said. "Safety, and making sure our kids believe in that safety, support that safety, and share it with their friends if they don't know."</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/03 Mexico 'Gringo Hunters' target US fugitives |
| SOURCE | https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/interactive/2022/mexico-us-fugitive-gringo-hunter/ |
| GIST | <p>ENSENADA, Mexico — The fugitive could have been anywhere, so Ivan kept his voice down.</p> <p>"We know he's probably armed," he told the members of his team.</p> |

They had pulled into a parking lot near the cruise ship terminal, a semicircle of undercover Mexican police officers, handguns hidden in the waistbands of their jeans.

If anyone asked, they were just friends on their way to the beach on a cloudless morning. But behind their sunglasses, their eyes darted between possible suspects. They were searching — as always — for an American.

“Another guy who thinks he can create a new life in Mexico,” Ivan said.

Information had trickled in from the U.S. Marshals Service in the case of Damion Salinas, a 21-year-old accused of killing a man after a traffic accident in Fresno, Calif.

But the intelligence was weak. Salinas appeared to have crossed the border into Mexico. He might be working as a barber in Ensenada. Or he might be in Tijuana. Or in any of the expat hideouts in between along the rocky coastline. Authorities had lost track of him more than a year earlier.

The cops knew this feeling well. Their cases almost always began the same way — with a sense that the gringos could be anywhere.

There are a lot of them: Americans on the run from U.S. law enforcement who have slipped into northern Mexico. They include fugitives on the FBI’s “Ten Most Wanted” list, serial killers, billionaires [accused](#) of securities fraud.

Here in Baja California, there’s one small unit of state police — 10 men and two women — assigned to catch them. Officially, they’re the International Liaison Unit. But they’re known by another name: the Gringo Hunters.

Pursuing American fugitives in Mexico might seem like the punchline of an unwritten joke, a xenophobic stereotype inverted: Donald Trump’s “bad hombres” in reverse.

This is, after all, the Baja Peninsula, a dagger of land jutting into the Pacific, with deserted beaches and sprawling cities that nurture anonymity. Among its most popular tourism campaigns? “Escape to Baja.”

The unit now catches an average of 13 Americans a month. Since it was formed in 2002, it has apprehended more than 1,600. Many of those suspects were inspired by one of America’s oldest clichés: the troubled outlaw striding into a sepia-toned Mexico in the hope of disappearing forever.

“I’m goin’ to Mexico,” Susan Sarandon says in “Thelma & Louise” after her character kills a man.

“Way down to Mexico way,” Jimi Hendrix sang. “Ain’t no hangman gonna — he ain’t gonna put a rope around me.”

Ivan knows the stereotypes — all the ways life imitates art in Baja — because he apprehends versions of the same misguided fugitive every other day.

“We find them everywhere,” he said. “And almost always, they have no idea we’re looking for them. They think: ‘We’re in Mexico. We’re home free.’ ”

Here’s an incomplete list of where Mexican officers have found American fugitives:

In beach resorts. Dangling from parasails. In remote mountain cabins. In fishing boats. At a nightclub called Papas & Beer. In drug rehabilitation centers. In trailer parks. Tending bars. In cars with prostitutes. In Carl’s Jr. parking lots.

Some were on crystal meth. Some had undergone plastic surgery and acquired new names they couldn't pronounce. Some were found dead.

There were former Playboy models, Catholic priests, professional athletes, C-list celebrities, ex-Marines.

So when the case of Damion Salinas crossed the Gringo Hunters' desk, it seemed pretty straightforward. Then again, so had other cases.

It was late March. The unit had been busier than at any other time in its history. While politicians in Washington argued over whether there was a crisis at the border, it felt to the Gringo Hunters that crime was spilling over in the opposite direction.

"Honestly, I think it's all the drugs over there," said Moises, the liaison unit's commander. Like other unit members, he spoke on the condition that his last name be withheld so he can continue to work undercover.

In its office, the unit keeps a whiteboard with the month's apprehensions tallied by name, date and charge. In the first three weeks of March, there were eight accused of drug trafficking, two of murder and one of pedophilia.

The Salinas case was another one that seemed to reflect something rotten across the border. On Aug. 16, 2020, Salinas allegedly arrived at the scene of a traffic accident involving his girlfriend. Several people argued over who was responsible for the crash. Within minutes, authorities say, Salinas pulled out a handgun and shot 36-year-old Joshua Thao at close range.

"He never saw it coming because he shook the killer's hand thinking everything was fine," the victim's sister, told a local TV news reporter.

Nineteen months later, Baja police received a tip that Salinas was cutting hair at the Teximani barbershop in Ensenada, a small black storefront painted with murals of boxing champions.

The bulletin from U.S. authorities was emblazoned with Salinas's photo.

"DANGEROUS," it warned in bold.

"Remember," Ivan told his team at the outset, "don't take any unnecessary risks."

One of the younger undercover officers, a lanky man with braces named Carlos, went into the barbershop and sat down for a haircut.

"Just a little off the sides," he said, and looked around for Damian.

The Gringo Hunters are trained to spot the ways Americans make themselves conspicuous in Mexico. They wear more shorts and more flip-flops. Many speak little Spanish. One officer swears he can identify how long a gringo has been in Mexico by the depth of his tan.

Carlos had studied the photos of Salinas from his Facebook profile. He was 6 feet tall and 185 pounds, an amateur rapper. He wore his hair in dreadlocks. "Forever West Coast" was tattooed on his right arm.

"This guy is going to stand out," Carlos thought.

Scanning the shop, he didn't see Salinas. But there was an apartment upstairs and a steady flow of clients. He called for backup.

That's how three unmarked cars, each with two or three heavily armed agents, came to be sitting outside the barbershop. I was in the back of one of the cars, behind Ivan and his colleague Abigail.

Spring-breakers were taking selfies along the bay. New copies of the biweekly Gringo Gazette — with its tagline “No Bad News” — had recently been delivered. Ivan turned up the Bad Bunny song on the radio. He squinted through the windshield.

“Where are youuu, Damion?” he said, to no one in particular.

Ivan, like the rest of the team, had grown up along the border. He prefers “thank you” to “gracias.” He worked for years in construction and then as a bodyguard. In 2010, he was recruited by the Gringo Hunters.

The unit’s existence surprised him.

“I was like, wait, you chase Americans?”

He shuddered when he learned that fugitive pedophiles often settle near primary schools. He noticed the mark the job was beginning to leave on him — the way he triple-checked that his front door was locked when he got home, or reproached his wife for sitting in the car too long outside their home.

“You’re raising our profile,” he insisted.

He learned that the dumbest fugitives were often the most violent. There was the Oregon man running from rape charges who worked as a surfing instructor with a LinkedIn profile (“High performing, results oriented”). There was the California murder suspect found in Tijuana after he posted a music video for a song called “Stay Gangsterific.”

Ivan’s job flickered between humor and danger, suddenly and without warning.

On his phone, he saved the photos of dozens of American fugitives he’d caught, like a digital trophy gallery. One recent photo showed the body of Anthony “Lucky” Luciano.

The police had been surveilling Luciano last year as he cruised downtown Tijuana. He was wanted for sexually assaulting a 14-year-old girl in Los Angeles. Hours into the mission, Luciano leapt from the car, spraying bullets. Then he hijacked a Mini Cooper with a woman in the back seat and continued shooting at the police. Ivan was hit in the foot.

The officers fired back. Luciano died of his wounds.

Parked in front of the barbershop, Ivan read through the WhatsApp group “DAMION SALINAS.” It included a map showing Baja barbershops where the target might be working.

“This guy must know people here,” Ivan said, scratching a chin covered by a few days of stubble. “Someone’s got to be hiding him.”

For decades, fugitives fleeing to Mexico have posed a profound challenge for U.S. law enforcement officers, who cannot operate independently on this side of the border. They rely instead on Mexican police to make apprehensions on their behalf. It isn’t extradition, which involves a formal request by the United States and a court process in Mexico. Technically, the gringos are deported for violating Mexican immigration law.

“Without the Mexicans able to do this for us, no one is going to get caught,” said Scott Garriola, a former FBI agent who led a fugitive task force in Los Angeles until 2019.

U.S. officials pass intelligence on to Mexican police. Sometimes it comes from tracing U.S. wire transfers to rural Mexican banks. Sometimes it’s from phone records of relatives in the United States. Sometimes it’s a tip, prompted by U.S. reward money.

After big cases, U.S. officials send plaques, FBI apparel and gift certificates to their Mexican counterparts. They invite the Mexican agents to training sessions across the United States and ply them with drinks and dinners.

“A lot of it boils down to keeping the jefes happy,” Garriola said.

Ivan and the others say they have a different motivation.

“We don’t want a bunch of criminals in our community,” Ivan said.

The Gringo Hunters had been sitting in front of the barbershop for about an hour when the U.S. marshals called again.

Ivan picked up his phone and nodded. His eyes widened.

“He’s not here,” Ivan told a colleague. “It looks like he’s in Tijuana.”

The team sped north, the ocean on their left. The sun above was parchment white. A string of gated communities sat perched along the cliffs. Many of the signs and billboards were in English.

“Last Corona for 25 miles.”

“Your home from \$134k.”

“Thong and Tequila Party.”

It was a Mexico bent to the contours of a foreigner’s fantasy. Abigail sped through it at 90 miles an hour. She gripped the steering wheel with one hand and held her phone with the other, firing off voice memos to headquarters.

“That’s the telephone number of the target,” she said in one. “Check to see if it’s registered.”

“Find out who has the deed to the barbershop,” she said in another.

“This is a homicide case,” she advised gently. “It’s a little bit urgent.”

Abigail was the only woman on Ivan’s team. She wore blue jeans and had straight hair down to her shoulders.

She, too, had grown up on the border, in Tijuana, secretly dreaming of becoming a police officer. Her mother begged her not to. Abigail waited until her own daughter was 2, and then signed up.

A few years later, she transferred to the Gringo Hunters and immediately helped make several major arrests. Still, even when her colleagues praise her, the compliments can sometimes be loaded.

“She can do anything,” Ivan said. “She’s like a man in a woman’s body.”

Abigail says she isn’t bothered. She rose to the top position in the liaison unit’s Tijuana field office.

She became known for finding ways to capture fugitives without engaging in high-speed chases or shootouts. When a former Texas police officer, wanted for sexually assaulting a child, fled to Rosarito, she tracked his Facebook account until he posted to a local expat group, looking for a woman to show him around.

Abigail created a fake profile and contacted him to offer a tour. When he showed up, freshly coifed and wearing cologne, the team arrested him.

“You expect these guys to be smarter than that,” she said.

The team quipped about her having a “woman’s sixth sense” — and maybe there was something to that, she thought.

“As a woman, I knew how to hook him.”

She half-joked about migrating to the United States to increase her salary, roughly a thousand dollars a month.

“I could apply a lot of blush and tell them I’m Ukrainian,” she said.

But the more time she spends in the unit, the less appealing the United States has come to seem. Is it possible to arrest a nonstop procession of gringo criminals without feeling a little less enthusiastic about their country?

Last year, during my first trip with the unit, we followed a couple accused of murder in Hilmar, Calif., to the small fishing village of San Felipe, near the southern tip of Baja California.

Members of the team drove along the beach in ATVs, pretending to be tourists while doing their reconnaissance. Afterward, they barbecued carne asada on the beach. Their pistols were visible at their waists. At times, the team seemed to exhibit more swagger — the power trip that came with arresting dozens of Americans a year — than tactical prowess.

It was Abigail who seemed to do the job most effectively — and without the ego. She worked her phones from the beach, checking with police contacts in the United States and Mexico. She interviewed potential witnesses and collaborators, inching closer to the couple. They were eventually detained off a desolate beach road. They asked: How’d you find us?

If that wasn’t enough to win her colleagues over, it was Abigail who had shot Anthony “Lucky” Luciano in Tijuana.

It was noon when Abigail parked across the street from Bunker Cuts in Tijuana.

The U.S. marshals believed Salinas might be living in the apartment above the barbershop. Abigail could see a rack of clothes left to dry on the patio.

They waited, air conditioning blasting, staring through the windshield. The conversation turned — as it always did — to speculation about the fugitive’s life on the run. Which version of the Baja outlaw life had Salinas chosen, they wondered. Was he parasailing? Was he in a mountain hut, protected by cartel gunmen?

Some fugitives have lived in Mexico for decades without being caught. Others last only a few days. Baldomero Barrientos Banuelos, who allegedly stabbed his wife to death in North Hollywood, Calif, has been at large for 29 years.

“Some of these guys are really gifted at blending in,” Ivan said.

Abigail went to the store next to the barbershop, bought a plastic cup of potato chips dipped in chili and came back shaking her head.

“Nothing,” she said.

To pass the time, they talked about old cases: the alleged pedophile who tried to stab himself when he was apprehended, the ex-football star who was so strong that it took the entire team to detain him.

The call came out of nowhere, another officer on the walkie-talkie.

“That looks like him. In the beige Honda Accord.”

Abigail and Ivan turned on a siren and took off, tearing through two lanes of traffic. It took them about 15 seconds to cut off the Accord. They pulled a tall, thin man out of the car.

He didn’t look much like the picture of Salinas I’d seen, grimacing at the camera. He was gangly, with a bowl haircut and a wispy mustache. He wore a pair of Air Jordan sandals. He looked like he’d just woken up from a nap.

“I don’t think it’s him,” Ivan said.

But when Ivan took a wallet out of the man’s pocket, there it was: a California driver’s license with the name “Damion Ariza Salinas.”

“Pon las manos atras,” one of the agents shouted.

It became clear Salinas didn’t understand, so the agent repeated the words in English.

“Put your hands in the back.”

“Do you speak Spanish?” Ivan asked.

“Muy poco,” Salinas responded.

Traffic had halted. Pedestrians gawked. A few faces peered out from the barbershop and then ducked back inside.

“Who should we give the key to the car to?” Abigail asked.

Salinas looked confused.

“Well I’m going ...” he began.

“You’re not going anywhere,” she said. “You’re coming with us.”

The agents handcuffed Salinas and led him to the back seat of one of the unmarked cars.

They agreed to let me sit in the back with him, if an agent sat between us, ready to restrain Salinas if he lunged. But he didn’t. He looked calm.

I told him I was a journalist.

“That’s a badass job,” he said.

He’d been watching “Narcos,” the Netflix series, which includes a journalist character.

First he told me that he had no idea why he’d been apprehended. When he shrugged, his handcuffs jangled.

“I’m just chilling,” he said. “I came out here for a better life.”

“You seem pretty relaxed,” I said.

“Inside I’m freaking out,” he said.

Abigail was weaving through traffic on the way to the police intake center. Ivan called his colleagues in the United States.

“We got him,” he said.

A few minutes into our conversation, Salinas hung his head. His tone changed, as if he had realized that playing a bemused tourist wasn’t going to work. He acknowledged fleeing to Mexico to hide from U.S. law enforcement.

“I knew they were looking for me,” he said.

Salinas started describing his year in Mexico as if it were a semester abroad. At first, he said, he was careful, changing motels almost every night. But as the months passed, he took more chances.

He’d spent some time on a Jet Ski. He’d picked up a few women at bars. He’d visited hotels on the beach.

“You know, resort trips,” he said.

When cops pulled Salinas over for traffic infractions, he would pay them off with small bribes.

Other times, he watched officers from a distance, and assumed they were looking for him.

“I’d look at them and be like, ‘Look at those dumbasses. They hit the wrong spot.’ ”

But over time, the life wore on him. He tired of keeping constant watch for the police. He got lonely. He would wake up covered in sweat.

“I thought about just crossing back over the border, turning myself in,” he said.

He refused to talk about the killing. But when I asked about his efforts to hide, he beamed.

“I was always 10 steps ahead. I just stopped trying after a while.”

I asked why he hadn’t tried to go farther south, away from the border.

“That’s too deep, bro. I don’t know what’s out there.” Tijuana, he said, “is kind of Americanized in a way.”

Ivan put “Gangsta’s Paradise” on the stereo and turned up the volume. He asked me to ask Salinas if he was a rapper. Salinas smiled and said no.

Ivan then pulled up a video on his phone of Salinas rapping.

“Oh,” Salinas said, getting his first glimpse into the manhunt that had led to his apprehension.

The car pulled up at the police station and the agents escorted Salinas inside. They were still struggling to communicate across the language barrier.

“You really need to learn Spanish,” Ivan told him.

“Everyone tells me that,” Salinas responded, blushing a little.

After Salinas had been processed — his fingerprints taken, his tattoos documented — the next stop was a small immigration office.

A poster enumerating “A Foreigner’s Rights and Duties in a Migratory Station” was posted on the wall in English.

“Am I being extradited?” he asked me. I asked Ivan to answer.

“Tell him he’s being deported by Mexican immigration,” he said.

I asked Salinas what he thought.

“Does California have the death penalty?” he asked.

I said I didn’t think so.

“Then I’ll be good,” he said.

We got back in the car. The sun was setting as we drove to the border.

Abigail passed the first sign for San Diego. Then the encampment of recently arrived Ukrainian refugees.

She parked the car. We walked toward the plaque that marks the boundary between the United States and Mexico. Salinas’s feet were now shackled, too. He walked slowly with his head down.

A group of U.S. agents was waiting. One stood up straight, as if preparing to give chase if the fugitive ran.

A Mexican agent took the handcuffs off Salinas’s wrists and a U.S. agent immediately replaced them with a different pair of handcuffs. The exchange had the feeling of a ceremony without an audience. Then Salinas was gone, escorted by a team of agents in tactical gear into a maze of government buildings. On May 19, he pleaded not guilty to a charge of murder.

The Gringo Hunters walked away from the border crossing, California at their backs. If the image felt familiar, it’s because I’d seen it before, a Hollywood cliché now turned on its head: the protagonists, tired but triumphant, striding into Mexico.

Their next assignment had already popped up in a WhatsApp message. A California woman had been accused of kidnapping and drugging a 5-year-old girl. The report said she was living in a trailer park near the beach west of Tijuana.

Abigail and Ivan exchanged a fist bump and set a time to meet the following morning.

The next day looked to be another long one.

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| HEADLINE | 06/04 Former judge killed in targeted attack |
| SOURCE | https://www.cnn.com/2022/06/04/us/wisconsin-judge-killed-targeted-attack/index.html |
| GIST | <p>A former Wisconsin judge was killed Friday in what authorities are calling a targeted attack by a suspect who also had other government officials as targets, a source familiar with the investigation told CNN.</p> <p>Former Juneau County Circuit Court Judge John Roemer was killed in New Lisbon, Wisconsin, the source said. The killing stems from a court case or cases, the Wisconsin Justice Department explained.</p> <p>The suspect, who has not been publicly identified, had other targets in mind – including Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, the source told CNN. Another source corroborated the officials’ names to CNN.</p> |

The [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel first reported](#) the judge was the victim and that the governor had also been a target.

“This as I mentioned before does appear to be a targeted act and the individual who is a suspect appears to have had other targets as well. It appears to be related to the judicial system,” Wisconsin Attorney General Josh Kaul said Friday in a news conference, stopping short of naming the victim.

Kaul added that investigators are not aware of any evidence that points to danger for other people, noting the probe is ongoing.

“Those who may have been other targets have been notified of that, but we are not aware of any active threat to individuals,” he said. “If we become aware of any specific ongoing threat, we will certainly notify people when we are aware of that.”

CNN has reached out to the governor’s office, McConnell’s office, the US Capitol Police, the Juneau County Sheriff’s Office and the Wisconsin Justice Department.

The attack appears to have begun Friday morning, when the Juneau County Special Tactics and Response Team entered a house and found a 68-year-old man dead in his home, the Wisconsin DOJ said in a [statement](#).

There were attempts to negotiate with a person inside the home before the team entered. Authorities found a 56-year-old man in the basement with what seemed to be a self-inflicted gunshot wound, the state DOJ said.

“Law enforcement began life-saving measures, and the individual was transported to a medical facility. A firearm was recovered at the scene,” the statement said.

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| HEADLINE | 06/03 Security app sheds light Uvalde response |
| SOURCE | https://abcnews.go.com/US/security-app-sheds-light-emergency-response-uvalde-school/story?id=85171495 |
| GIST | <p>A Robb Elementary School employee triggered an internal alert system less than a minute before a gunman entered the building in Uvalde, Texas, and opened fire, according to the company that makes the alert system.</p> <p>The alert was initiated using a security app on the employee's mobile phone at 11:32:26 a.m. on May 24, a spokesperson for the company, Raptor Technologies, confirmed to ABC News Friday. That was two minutes after the first 911 call, based on the timeline from law enforcement officials.</p> <p>The shooter entered the school at 11:33 a.m., according to Col. Steven McCraw, director of the Texas Department of Public Safety.</p> <p>The employee pressed a "lockdown" button and a button that warned of an active shooter, according to Raptor Technologies. The system then blasted out emails, text messages and cellphone alarms to other school employees.</p> <p>Robb Elementary School posted to Facebook at 11:43 a.m. that the campus had gone under lockdown "due to gunshots in the area."</p> <p>The security app information, first reported by The New York Times, helps answer initial questions about whether the school had enacted any of its emergency protocols when confronted with a gunman on the property.</p> |

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| | <p>A teacher who saw the shooter approach the school armed with a gun called 911 and shut a door to the school which for some reason did not lock, authorities said. Law enforcement is looking into why the door did not lock, the Texas Department of Public Safety confirmed to ABC News.</p> <p>The shooter entered the school through the unlocked door, walked into a classroom and opened fire using an AR-15-style rifle, ultimately killing 19 students and two teachers, authorities said.</p> <p>The suspected gunman, 18-year-old Salvador Ramos, was shot and killed by responding law enforcement at the scene.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/03 Man stabs 3 inside Southern Calif. hospital |
| SOURCE | https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/man-stabs-medical-staffers-southern-california-hospital-85172361 |
| GIST | <p>LOS ANGELES -- A man stabbed a doctor and two nurses inside a Southern California hospital emergency ward on Friday and remained inside a room for hours before police arrested him, authorities said.</p> <p>The man walked into Encino Hospital Medical Center in the San Fernando Valley shortly before 4 p.m., Los Angeles police Officer Drake Madison said.</p> <p>The man had parked his car in the middle of a street and went to the emergency room, where he asked for treatment for anxiety before stabbing the doctor and nurses, authorities said.</p> <p>Fire officials said three victims were taken to a trauma center in critical condition. Police later said one was in critical condition and underwent surgery.</p> <p>All three were later listed in stable condition at Dignity Health Northridge Hospital Medical Center.</p> <p>The first floor of the Encino hospital and some nearby offices were evacuated, police said.</p> <p>"We've moved patients out of the danger zone," LAPD Deputy Chief Alan Hamilton said at a news conference.</p> <p>There was no evidence that the man knew the victims, Hamilton added.</p> <p>The man remained inside a room in the hospital for about four hours as SWAT team members tried to unsuccessfully to negotiate with him before he was finally arrested, police said.</p> <p>He was taken to another hospital for treatment of self-inflicted injuries to his arms, authorities said.</p> <p>The man's name wasn't immediately released, but Hamilton said he had a lengthy criminal record, including two arrests last year for battery of a police officer and resisting arrest.</p> <p>Benjamin Roman, an ultrasound technician, told KNBC-TV that before the stabbing, he saw the man, who had a dog with him and who might have been high on drugs because he looked anxious and was drenched in sweat.</p> <p>After the hospital issued an "internal triage" code, Roman said he saw a doctor and a nurse who had been stabbed.</p> <p>"The doctor looked (like) she was in pain," he said. "There was a lot of blood and it looked like ... he might have got her abdomen."</p> |

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| | <p>The attack comes only two days after a gunman killed four people and then himself at a hospital in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The assailant got inside a building on the Saint Francis Hospital campus with little trouble, just hours after buying an AR-style rifle, authorities said.</p> <p>The man killed his surgeon and three other people at a medical office. He blamed the doctor for his continuing pain after a recent back operation.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/04 Laws limit paths to accountability in Uvalde |
| SOURCE | https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/04/us/uvalde-police-liability.html |
| GIST | <p>In the aftermath of the mass shooting at an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas, parents and community members have clamored for accountability, asking how officers allowed a gunman to remain inside a locked classroom with injured students for more than an hour.</p> <p>But any legal remedy could be difficult to achieve. A civil lawsuit would have to overcome the legal immunity that protects police officers during the course of their duties. And while police officers have occasionally been charged and convicted when their actions caused death, criminal charges against police officers who failed to protect the public are extremely rare.</p> <p>Generally speaking, said Seth Stoughton, a former officer who now tracks police accountability as a professor of law and criminal justice at the University of South Carolina, actions are legally easier to punish than omissions.</p> <p>“I think it would be difficult, but it’s possible,” he said, adding, “We can only punish someone for failing to do something if they were legally required to do it.” The law usually does not require people to put themselves in harm’s way even if training instructs them to do so, Professor Stoughton said.</p> <p>Officers with the Uvalde school district’s police force had gone through active shooter training as recently as two months ago, with guidelines that call for them to confront a gunman to halt the bloodshed. “A first responder unwilling to place the lives of the innocent above their own safety should consider another career field,” the guidelines say.</p> <p>While some of the first officers on the scene initially moved toward the door that the gunman was behind, they were grazed with bullets, and the district police chief decided to delay a confrontation, officials have said. A growing group of officers waited for more than an hour outside the classrooms where the gunman had opened fire, even as children inside the rooms called 911 and pleaded for help.</p> <p>There is a precedent for bringing charges against law enforcement for its response to a mass casualty event. In the shooting that killed 17 people at a high school in Parkland, Fla., four years ago, prosecutors are pursuing a criminal case against Scot Peterson, arguing that as a school resource officer, the laws that apply to caregivers should apply to him. Mr. Peterson, who prosecutors say took cover behind a wall while a gunman moved through several floors of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, has been charged with seven felony counts of child neglect.</p> <p>Mr. Peterson had been trained in how to deal with mass shootings several times and was an instructor for active killer training, according to a statement filed by prosecutors. The training prioritized the lives of deputies third, after hostages or victims and innocent bystanders, but before suspects. Officers in Uvalde were taught similar priorities in their active shooting training.</p> <p>Mr. Peterson has defended his actions, saying he believed that the gunman was outside the school building. The trial is tentatively scheduled for September.</p> <p>In Texas, prosecutors could potentially turn to the state’s statute on negligent homicide, said Laurie Levenson, a former federal prosecutor who is now a professor at Loyola Law School. She said officers could also face charges under federal civil rights statutes, but they require proving an officer’s intent.</p> |

Experts said such a case would revolve around whether the officers had a duty to act in that moment and whether the failure to do so amounted to deliberate indifference. The Texas penal code says criminal negligence results when a person “ought to be aware of a substantial and unjustifiable risk that the circumstances exist or the result will occur.”

“The risk must be of such a nature and degree that the failure to perceive it constitutes a gross deviation from the standard of care that an ordinary person would exercise,” it says.

Such a case would require a deep look at the decision-making and the many factors the officers considered in the moment. Authorities have said that the incident commander ordered officers not to confront the gunman, believing that the situation had transitioned from an active shooter scenario to a barricaded subject, which can call for a more deliberative approach.

“It’s a lot more complicated when the officers failed to act,” Professor Levenson said. “It doesn’t mean that you don’t bring charges, but you have to look at why they failed to act.”

Kevin Lawrence, the executive director of the Texas Municipal Police Association, said it would generally be hard to prove that an officer had such an extreme level of indifference that it rose to a criminal rather than a disciplinary level.

“You can’t criminalize failure,” Mr. Lawrence said. “As long as you are picking cops from the human race, they are still going to be subject to human failures.”

Nicole DeBorde Hochglaube, a defense lawyer in Houston who has represented numerous law enforcement officers, said that while charges for failing to act might encounter legal difficulties, investigators were probably also looking to see if officers could face other charges, given the numerous incorrect accounts of the shooting given by officials early on. Police reports that do not align with body camera footage, 911 calls or other records could open officers up to such charges, she said.

Unlike criminal charges, civil lawsuits in the case are a near certainty, even though Texas law makes it difficult to sue police departments, school districts and other government entities. The school district can be shielded by sovereign immunity — a doctrine protecting the government from litigation — while the police may be protected by qualified immunity doctrine that has long shielded officers from liability for mistakes they make on the job.

Erik Knockaert, a lawyer in Houston, said the state’s sovereign immunity does have an exemption for issues involving real property such as a building. He said families could potentially have a legal claim over how the doors were managed. The gunman was able to enter a side door at the school and a classroom door that were both supposed to be locked.

“It’s not a slam dunk case, but there could be something that could be explored,” he said.

Even if families did prove liability, Texas law divides damages based on who is most responsible, including the gunman himself. That could limit how much the families could get in damages, should they win a case.

Randall Kallinen, a civil rights lawyer in Houston, said that among other possible grounds, parents who were prevented from entering the school to rescue their children may have a claim that their right to be free from unreasonable search and seizure was violated. He pointed to a 1990 case, *Ross v. United States*, where a boy fell into a lake in Waukegan, Ill. Several would-be rescuers arrived within minutes, including two lifeguards and two scuba divers, but the sheriff prevented them from attempting to save the boy because of a policy that said only divers from the local Fire Department could rescue people from that lake.

Those divers took 20 minutes to arrive, and the boy died.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit ruled that both the county and the sheriff could be sued on the grounds that they deprived the boy of his right to life. “When a state cuts off sources of private aid,” the judges said, “it must provide replacement protection.”

But such cases often turn on a distinction between direct action, such as actively preventing rescuers, and failure to act. In 2005 the Supreme Court ruled against a woman who sued the police for failing to enforce her order of protection against her estranged husband, despite numerous pleas to do so. He had taken her three children, in violation of the order, and killed them.

The court, in an opinion by Justice Antonin Scalia, said the woman was not entitled to enforcement of the protection order, and drew a contrast between government action that directly deprives someone of their rights and government action — or inaction — against a third party that affects the complaining citizen only “incidentally.”

Another legal tactic in recent years has been the targeting of gun manufacturers. This past week, lawyers for a family and also a school employee in Uvalde have signaled their intention to sue the manufacturer of the gun used in the attack, Daniel Defense. One of the lawyers petitioned in court to have company officials sit for a deposition focused on how the firm markets AR-15-style rifles and profits from them.

State Representative Carl Sherman Sr., a Democrat, said he would like to see more built-in accountability to investigate law enforcement failures, noting that other professions, such as nursing, have more robust systems in place.

“It is time that we have more systemic accountability in policing,” he said. “Apologizing for poor decisions is just not sufficient.”

But Mr. Sherman, whose son is a police officer, was unsure whether criminal accountability was the right path for handling officers who failed to protect others. He noted that officers initially responding to a scene with a basic service handgun on their hip may find themselves ill-equipped to confront the high-powered weaponry of a gunman.

Lawmakers have the responsibility to change those dynamics, he said, by banning assault weapons and high-capacity magazines. He also said legislative solutions such as stronger background checks, safe-storage laws, red-flag laws and more opportunity to hold gun manufacturers liable are options for protecting communities from the threat of mass shootings, short of putting so much responsibility in the hands of the police.

“The responsibility is primarily with lawmakers,” he said. “We are putting officers in these positions.”

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| HEADLINE | 06/03 No radio, old tactics Uvalde police response |
| SOURCE | https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/03/us/uvalde-police-response.html |
| GIST | <p>UVALDE, Texas — Two minutes after a gunman burst through an unlocked door at Robb Elementary School and began shooting inside a pair of connected classrooms, Pete Arredondo arrived outside, one of the first police officers to reach the scene.</p> <p>The gunman could still be heard firing repeatedly, and Chief Arredondo, as leader of the small school district police force in Uvalde, took charge.</p> <p>But there were problems from the start.</p> <p>Chief Arredondo did not have a police radio with him, according to a law enforcement official familiar with the investigation, which may have impeded his immediate ability to communicate with police</p> |

dispatchers. As two supervisors from the local police department were grazed by bullets fired by the gunman, he made a decision to fall back, the official said.

Using a cellphone, the chief called a police landline with a message that set the stage for what would prove to be a disastrous delay in interrupting the attack: The gunman has an AR-15, he told them, but he is contained; we need more firepower and we need the building surrounded.

Rather than confront an actively shooting gunman immediately, [as officers have been trained to do](#) since [the killings at Columbine High School](#) in 1999, the ever-growing force of increasingly armed officers arriving at Robb Elementary held back for more than an hour.

A New York Times examination of the police response, based on dozens of interviews with law enforcement officials, children who survived, parents who were witnesses outside and experts on policing, found that breakdowns in communication and tactical decisions that were out of step with years of police preparations for school shootings may have contributed to additional deaths, and certainly delayed critical medical attention to the wounded.

A tactical team led by Border Patrol officers ultimately ignored orders not to breach the classroom, interviews revealed, after a 10-year-old girl inside the classroom warned 911 dispatchers that one of the two teachers in the room was in urgent need of medical attention.

The report that the incident commander at least initially had no police radio emerges as the latest important detail in what has been a shifting official account of the police response that has at times proved to be inaccurate on key points about the May 24 shooting.

Spokesmen for the Texas Rangers and the U.S. Justice Department, the two agencies now investigating the response, have said they would not be able to reach final conclusions until all interviews had been conducted and all available video and other evidence had been reviewed.

Officers who arrived at the scene, coming from at least 14 agencies, did not go into the classrooms as sporadic gunfire could be heard inside, nor after 911 calls began arriving from children inside.

“There is a lot of bodies,” a 10-year-old student, Khloie Torres, quietly told a 911 dispatcher at 12:10 p.m. — 37 minutes after the gunman began shooting inside the classrooms — according to a review of a transcript of the call. “I don’t want to die, my teacher is dead, my teacher is dead, please send help, send help for my teacher, she is shot but still alive.”

She stayed on the line for about 17 minutes. Around 11 minutes into the call, the sound of gunfire could be heard.

The officers who finally breached the locked classrooms with a janitor’s key were not a formal tactical unit, according to a person briefed on the response. The officers, including specially trained Border Patrol and Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents and a sheriff’s deputy, formed an ad hoc group on their own and gathered in the hallway outside the classroom, a tense space where they said there appeared to be no chain of command.

They were done waiting for permission, one of them said, according to the person, before they moved toward the classroom where the gunman waited. They continued even after one of them heard a command crackling in his earpiece: Do not breach.

They entered the room and killed the gunman.

The actions by Chief Arredondo and the array of officers he suddenly directed — which grew to number more than 140, from local, state and federal agencies, including state troopers, sheriff’s deputies, constables and game wardens — are now the subject of overlapping investigations by the Texas Rangers, the Justice Department and the local district attorney’s office.

Chief Arredondo did not respond to requests for comment. Neither did the chief of the Uvalde Police Department, Daniel Rodriguez, or the county sheriff, Ruben Nolasco. The Texas Department of Public Safety, which is overseeing the Rangers' investigation and had a large presence of state police at the scene, referred questions to the district attorney's office, which did not comment.

"I think they're unfair to accuse anybody until we know all the facts," said Uvalde County's top executive, Bill Mitchell. "We have agencies coming out and saying there were mistakes. How do we know, days after, what mistakes?"

The fact that control of such a complex and prolonged scene of violence fell to the head of a police force with six members who are employed by the local school board seemed unusual in the aftermath of the tragedy. But it was in keeping with the way such events are expected to be handled in their early stages, according to policing experts and the leaders of school district police departments around Texas.

In cases where a shooting drags on, and more experienced departments establish themselves at the scene, control may sometimes be handed over to a larger department. That did not happen in Uvalde, officials have said.

School district police departments have jurisdiction over school campuses — in Uvalde, there are eight — as well as anywhere that school buses travel.

"If we should have a situation like that, we would go in, handle the situation, stop the kill, and at that point we would probably look to the state or the feds to assist us with the forensics," said Chief Solomon Cook of the Humble Independent School District Police Department, in the suburbs of Houston.

But while the presence of a school district police chief atop the hierarchy at Robb Elementary was not out of the ordinary, other elements of the response in Uvalde struck Chief Cook as concerning. One was the need to use a janitor's keys to ultimately gain entry to the classrooms. "All my people carry keys," said Chief Cook, who is president of the state's association for school district police chiefs.

Another was the uncertainty about whether Chief Arredondo had been receiving messages from police dispatchers about the children still in the classrooms pleading for help.

"We have direct communication with the P.D. dispatch, and we're about the size of Uvalde," said Chief Bill Avera, who runs a force of four school district officers, including himself, that covers eight campuses in Jacksonville, Texas.

A review of the response in Uvalde shows that the school acted almost immediately after the gunman hopped a fence and approached Robb Elementary after crashing a pickup truck and firing shots outside.

Adam Pennington, an 8-year-old student, was in the front office when the school received what appeared to be the first alert. "A phone call came in and said a man jumped the fence holding a gun," said Adam, who said he hurried to shelter under a table.

An employee on the campus used a cellphone to open a district security app, selecting a red "lockdown" button and a second button warning that there was an active shooter, according to David Rogers, the chief marketing officer for Raptor Technologies, the company that provides the security app.

That warning tool was part of an extensive effort to enhance security in the Uvalde school district, which also included two-way radios for "key staff," two new school district police officers and requirements that all classroom doors remain locked.

But Chief Arredondo had no police radio when he arrived, according to the latest information gathered in the investigation, and the door to the classroom where most of the killing occurred, Room 112, was unlocked when the gunman arrived.

The lockdown alert was sent at 26 seconds past 11:32 a.m., about two minutes after the initial 911 call from outside the school. It triggered an immediate mass distribution of emails, text messages and notifications that included blaring alarms sent to the cellphones of other school employees, Mr. Rogers said.

Less than a minute later, the gunman was already inside the school.

Khloie Torres had been watching a movie with her fourth-grade classmates in Room 112 when her teacher, Irma Garcia, told the class to go into lockdown. Ms. Garcia turned off the movie, and then rushed toward the classroom door to lock it. But she struggled to find the right key for the door. Gunfire could be heard in the hallways.

Ms. Garcia finally got hold of the right key, but the gunman was already there. “He grabbed the door, and he opened it,” Khloie said. Ms. Garcia tried to protect her students. The gunman began firing.

Khloie hid under a table, listening to more gunshots. “You’ll die,” the gunman said to the room.

He shot one of Khloie’s best friends, Amerie Jo Garza, and the other teacher in the class, Eva Mireles. Then the gunman said “Good night,” Khloie said, and began firing at students across the classroom.

One child shouted, “I’m shot,” catching the attention of the gunman. He came back to the spot where the child was lying and shot the student again, killing him, Khloie said.

Chief Arredondo arrived at 11:35 a.m., as the first officers began moving into the hallway outside the classroom door. Two minutes later, a lieutenant and a sergeant from the Uvalde Police Department approached the door, and were grazed by bullets.

Shortly after that, Chief Arredondo placed a phone call from the scene, reaching a police department landline. He described the situation and requested a radio, a rifle and a contingent of heavily armed officers, according to the law enforcement official familiar with the initial response, who described it on condition of anonymity because the official was not authorized to publicly disclose the details.

The decision to establish a perimeter outside the classroom, a little over five minutes after the shooting began, shifted the police response from one in which every officer would try to confront the gunman as fast as possible to one where officers treated the gunman as barricaded and no longer killing. Instead of storming the classroom, a decision was made to deploy a negotiator and to muster a more heavily armed and shielded tactical entry force.

“They made a poor decision, defining that as a hostage-barricade situation,” said Bill Francis, a former F.B.I. agent who was a senior leader on the bureau’s hostage rescue team for 17 years. “The longer you delay in finding and eliminating that threat, the longer he has to continue to kill other victims.”

Inside, the gunman moved between the two adjoining classrooms. After he left her room, Khloie said, she called out quietly: “Is anybody OK? Is anybody hurt?”

“Yeah,” one classmate replied.

“Just be quiet, so he doesn’t come back in here,” Khloie remembered responding. Another child asked for help getting Ms. Garcia’s body off her.

A boy in her class, Khloie said, was worried that the gunman would find them. “He won’t find us,” she told him.

Shortly after noon, nearly half an hour after the first police officers had arrived, Khloie began dialing 911. She said she called over and over again.

By then, the first tactical teams had arrived, along with officers carrying long guns. Scores of other officers were outside the school, keeping frantic parents away and starting to remove children from other classrooms, pulling some through windows. In video taken outside the school, Border Patrol agents could be seen donning specialized equipment at around 12:15 p.m.

Six minutes later, several shots were heard, the sound coming from inside the classroom.

Mayor Don McLaughlin of Uvalde said in an interview with CNN on Thursday that the gunman did not answer his telephone when a negotiator tried to call him.

In the hallway outside the classrooms, a throng of heavily armed law enforcement officers anxiously awaited instructions. But frustrations were growing, particularly among members of a Border Patrol tactical unit, according to the person who was briefed on the team's response.

"No one entity or individual seemed to have control of the scene," the person said. "It was chaos."

The sense of frustration among tactical team members was corroborated by two officials familiar with their debriefing.

After more than an hour, the ad hoc group of officers who had arrived ready to attack the gunman was growing impatient, and decided to move in.

One of the members — equipped with an earpiece and small microphone — quietly announced over the radio that the group was preparing to go into the classrooms. At that point a voice responded, telling them not to breach the doors.

They ignored the directive.

As the agents entered, the gunman appeared to be ready for them, the person said. He fired. They fired back, with at least one bullet striking him in the head. A bullet fragment also grazed the head of one of the Border Patrol agents.

As soon as the agents announced over the radio that the gunman had been killed, attention turned to treating the wounded. The agents helped set up a triage system, as more officers and emergency medical workers descended on the classrooms, trying to stabilize the children who had been shot but were still alive. At one point during the siege, one of the two children who called 911 had reported that at least eight or nine of the children in the two classrooms were still alive.

Khloie and her surviving classmates were rushed from the classroom. The bodies of 19 children were recovered, along with those of the two teachers. Seventeen people, including a third teacher, were wounded.

"I don't understand why somebody did not go in," said Khloie's mother, Jamie Torres. Children and teachers would have still been shot, she said, "but it would have been way less than 21."

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| HEADLINE | 06/03 New details Spokane student's threat |
| SOURCE | https://www.krem.com/article/news/crime/court-documents-threats-made-glover-middle-school-student/293-27883ad2-b88f-4f1f-a3cf-c261d4166652 |
| GIST | <p>SPOKANE, Wash. — Troubling new details regarding threats a local student allegedly made to staff at Glover Middle School have been revealed in court documents.</p> <p>Court documents show the 13-year-old student was suspended Feb. 18 when he threatened to kill a girl by stabbing her in the throat. Spokane police said they are not aware of the school reporting that incident.</p> |

Instead, the principal called 911 on May. 31 when a citizen walked into the school to report the same student, according to court documents.

That citizen is a construction worker who said he was approached by a 13-year-old boy on May 31 who said he was suspended because he hid a gun on the Glover Middle School campus.

According to court documents, the student claimed some men in their 20s were after him and he planned to shoot them if they showed up to the school. The boy also made comments about “going after” the school principal and vice principal. The contractor told police he saw the boy smoke marijuana and what appeared to be meth that day.

After the encounter, the man went to the school and reported his conversation to the vice principal, who called 911 and later told police she felt the student was capable of carrying out the threats. The vice principal also told police the 13-year-old had previously threatened to stab a teacher in the neck and pull out her veins, according to court documents.

The vice principal also told officers she's aware that the suspect and other students at Glover are “said to be able to buy and sell guns, including stolen guns,” according to court documents.

KREM 2 asked Spokane Public Schools why the student wasn't reported to police back in February when he allegedly threatened to stab and kill a classmate. District spokeswoman Sandra Jarrard said they would not be providing any comments, citing an ongoing investigation.

The FBI is currently looking into claims made by Spokane Police chief Craig Meidl, who said the district is failing to report serious crimes happening in schools.

The 13-year-old was arrested at his mom's house Wednesday, charged with felony harassment threats to kill. He made his first court appearance Thursday and remains in juvenile detention.

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| HEADLINE | 06/03 Multiple school threats since Uvalde |
| SOURCE | https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/multiple-school-threats-western-washington-since-uvalde/A6UZKZSCXZBTBOR6QMSJEZKMKE/ |
| GIST | <p>Since the tragedy in Uvalde, several schools in Western Washington have gone into lockdown due to school threats. On June 2, La Conner High School and a middle school in Tacoma had police respond to those threats.</p> <p>In Tacoma, a 13-year-old was arrested by police and faces several charges. According to the Skagit County Sheriff's Office, a 15-year-old was arrested.</p> <p>Here are more details of the incident at the school from Skagit County Sheriff's Office Undersheriff Chad Clark:</p> <p>“On June 2, 2022, the Skagit County Sheriff's Office and the Swinomish Police Department jointly responded to La Conner High School after multiple 911 calls were made after a post on Facebook mentioned a student threatened to shoot students at the La Conner High School. Law enforcement confirmed there was no active threat to students and staff, and that the student was not at school. Detectives learned that the student made threats that would take place at a specific event in the future. Multiple students and staff members were interviewed, and probable cause was developed to arrest the 15-year-old student. The student was arrested and booked into Skagit County Juvenile Detention on Threats to Bomb or Injure Property and three (3) counts of Felony Harassment Threats to Kill. The case is still under investigation.”</p> <p>KIRO7 spoke to Lt. Jeff Willard with the Skagit County Sheriff's Office, who says any threat toward any school is taken very seriously by all of law enforcement.</p> |

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| | <p>“And if somebody makes the call, we are there to answer the call to help,” Lt. Willard said.</p> <p>This is why he says all responses are all hands on deck.</p> <p>“We want to get an officer on scene as soon as possible to stop the killings to stop the damage that’s going on. Whatever that might be,” Lt. Willard said.</p> <p>Several other districts have had school threats and went into lockdown since Uvalde, such as Blaine School District and Cascade High School.</p> <p>Lt. Willard says that while the incident at La Conner High School wasn’t a copycat case, he says people should always report any threat they see.</p> <p>“I would much rather someone give me a phone call on something they interpret as threatening and we run down the lead and find out that is wasn’t or not say anything,” Lt. Willard said.</p> <p>Because the authorities want to make sure all students are safe.</p> <p>“Than in hindsight, we find out and go ‘boy, if we had known about this, we potentially could have help avert something like that,’” Lt. Willard said.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/03 Boy threatens Uvalde-style shooting |
| SOURCE | https://komonews.com/news/local/boy-13-arrested-after-allegedly-threatening-to-recreate-uvalde-school-shooting-in-tacoma |
| GIST | <p>TACOMA, Wash. – A 13-year-old has been booked into the juvenile detention center for threatening to replicate the Uvalde, Texas school shooting.</p> <p>The Tacoma Police Department (TPD) said it received a report the student threatened to shoot people at a school. A parent called TPD shortly after their child heard the suspected student make the threat.</p> <p>Officers did speak with the suspected student, while their parents were there. The boy was arrested for felony harassment Thursday and booked into Remann Hall.</p> <p>TPD said it is in a joint campaign with Tacoma Public Schools called “See Something, Say Something,” and urges others to do the same if they overhear a potential threat.</p> |
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| HEADLINE | 06/03 Man dies in Oregon jail: 3rd death 2 months |
| SOURCE | https://www.q13fox.com/news/man-dies-in-oregon-jail-facilitys-3rd-death-in-2-months |
| GIST | <p>PORTLAND - A man has become the third person to die while in jail custody in the past two months west of Portland, Oregon, prompting the Washington County sheriff to call for an independent investigation.</p> <p>The Washington County Sheriff’s Office said the death Wednesday in Hillsboro’s Washington County Jail involved a 51-year-old man who arrived at 7 a.m., The Oregonian/OregonLive reported.</p> <p>Deputies noticed the man wasn’t breathing shortly after 9:30 p.m. while he sat in a holding area waiting to be booked into the jail, according to the sheriff’s office. Efforts to revive him were unsuccessful, the sheriff’s office said.</p> <p>In a statement Thursday, Sheriff Pat Garrett called the three deaths "unprecedented" and said he was arranging to have an outside agency conduct an independent investigation.</p> |

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| | <p>On April 17, a deputy found Bryce Bybee, 22, unresponsive in his bed and he could not be revived, authorities said.</p> <p>Crystal Leuenberger, 35, died May 24 inside the jail. Leuenberger had arrived less than 24 hours earlier, the sheriff's office said.</p> <p>Sgt. Daniel DiPietro said he couldn't answer questions about what led up to Leuenberger's death, citing an open investigation.</p> <p>The state medical examiner's office conducted autopsies but has not issued a cause of death in all three cases, DiPietro said. He said the state medical examiner's office typically waits for toxicology results, which can take several months.</p> |
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